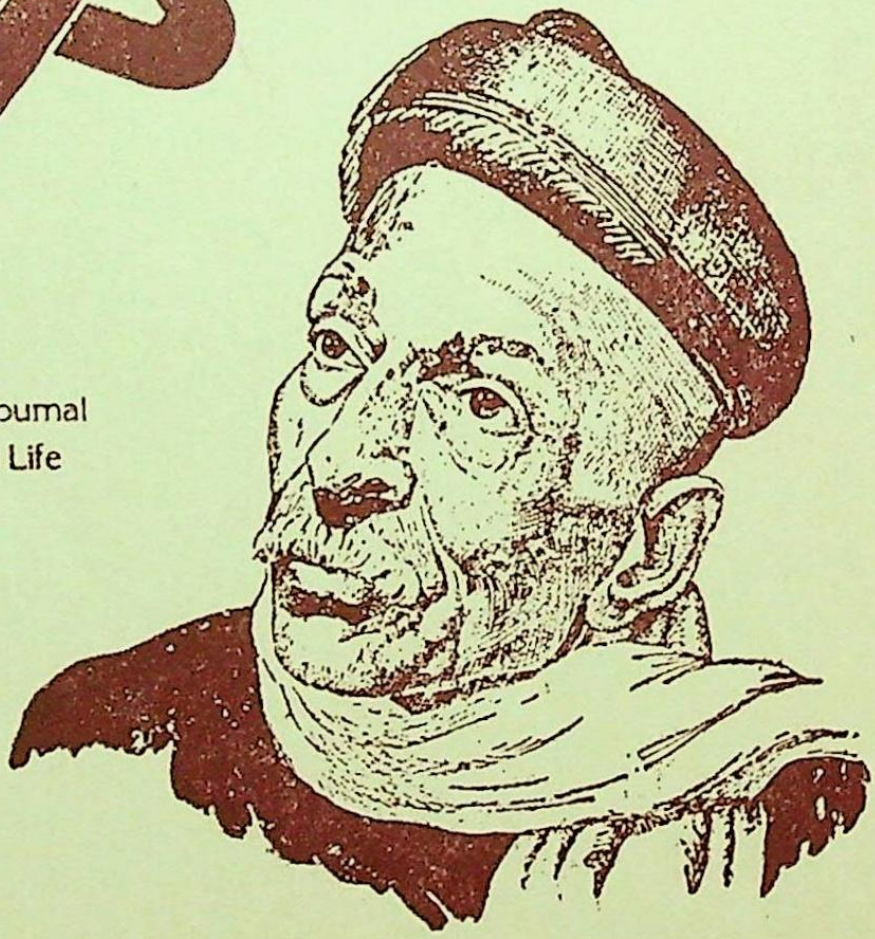
7/87

PATHWAY TO GOD

आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः



A Quarterly Journal
of Spiritual Life

ACADEMY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION, BELGAUM.

PATHWAY TO GOD

(A Quarterly Journal of Spiritual Life)

" One God, One World, One Humanity "

Vol. XXI July 1987 No. 4

PRAYER

ब्रह्मानन्दै परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्ति
द्वंद्वातीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम् ।
एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीसक्षिभूतं
भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि ।।

My salutations to Thee, Oh ! Holy Preceptor,
Bliss Supreme, Joy Eternal, Knowledge Incarnate,
Transcending the Dwandwas, Comparable to the vastness of sky,
' Thou art That ', The Symbol of Origin,
One, Eternal, Pure and Steadfast,
And Witness of all Wisdom,
One beyond the feeling and thought,
And untouched by the three Gunas;
My salutations to thee, Oh! Holy Preceptor.

— Vishwasaratantra

PATHWAY TO GOD

(A Quarterly Journal of Spiritual Life)

" One God, One World, One Humanity "

Vol. XXI **July 1987** **No. 4**

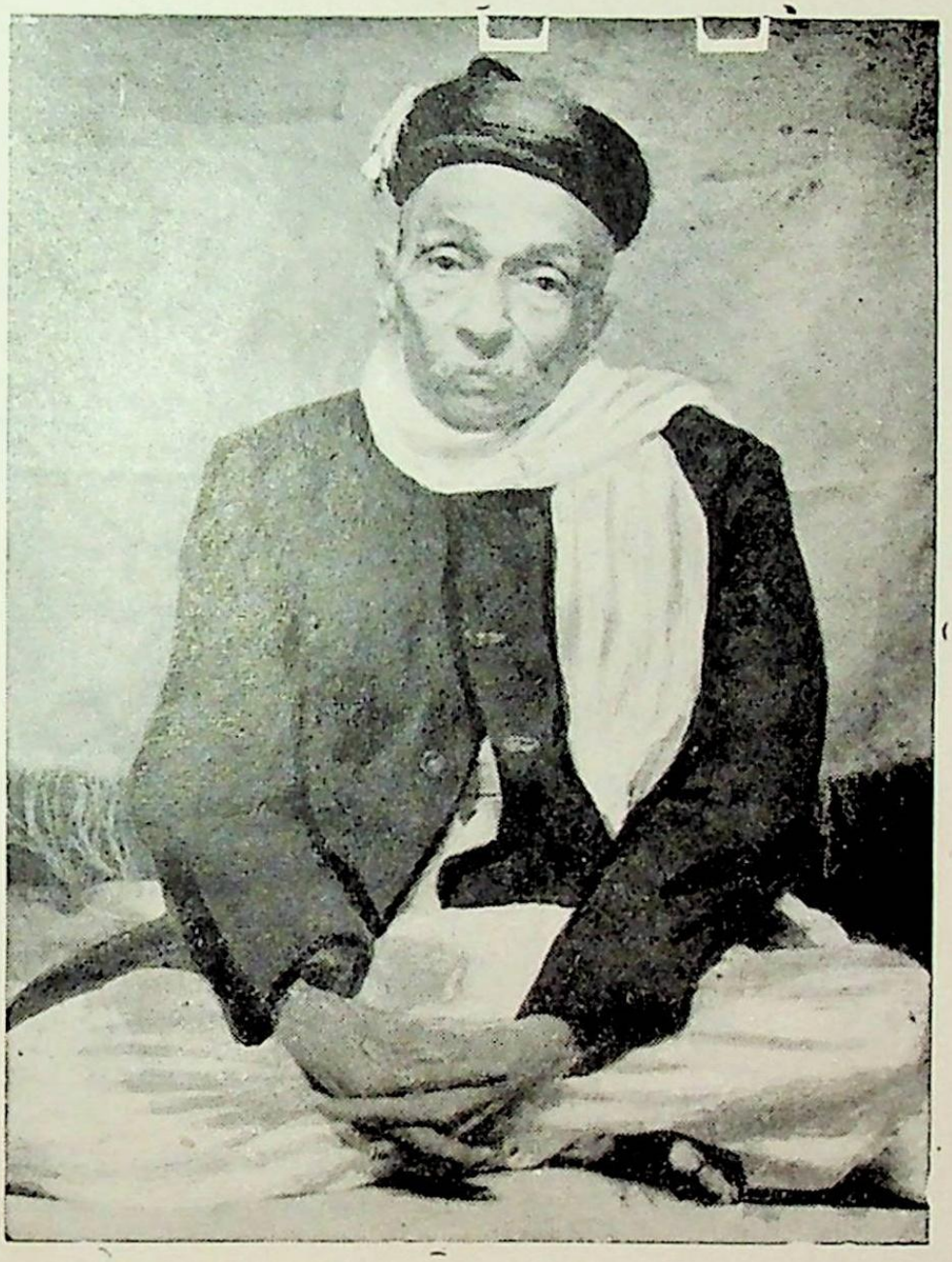
CONTENTS

	Prayer		i
	Editorial		iii
1.	Fundamentals of Christianity	*Bishop Ignatious Lobo*	1
2.	Fundamentals of Hinduism	*Prof. J. C. Haran*	12
3.	Fundamentals of Islam	*Mr. Shahid Mohamed*	22
4.	Fundamentals of Baha'ism	*Mr. Parviz K. Bidanjiri*	42
5.	Fundamentals of Theosophy	*Shri R. G. Kulkarni*	52
6.	Fundamentals of Jainism	*Dr. B. B. Raynade*	59
	Book Reviews		64
	Academy Report		68

Annual subscription

India (Bharat)	**Rs. 12**
Foreign	**„ 35**
Single copy	**„ 4**

Shri Gurudeo Dr. R. D. Ranade



Born :
Jamkhandi
3-7-1886

Samadhi :
Nimbal
6-6-1957

Editorial

Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion, Belgaum arranged a series of lectures on Fundamentals of Religious Faiths, at Gurudeo Mandir, from 17th to 23rd of February 1987. The esteemed guests invited to give talks were pleased to assist us by handing over the scripts of their talks.

The emphasis was on the Fundamentals. Naturally, the speakers could sketch the broad outlines of the different faiths. For Scholars, who have dived deep in the waters of these faiths, these lectures will be elementary; but for the younger generations, they are sure to open new fields of knowledge.

In an atmosphere, which is viciated by religious fanatics, where arson-loot and murder in the name of religion become order of the day, it is necessary to educate the young generation in the fundamentals of various faiths.

We boast of a culture of " Unity in Diversity ". If this is true, the proper understanding of the religions should be a force to bring about National emotional integration.

The Academy felt the need of such a thing and arranged this series of talks. For the benefit of the readers the talks have been brought out thruogh this number.

Of course the speakers own the views and the language of these speechs. Their sincerity in bringing out the valuable ideas from various authoritative works is unquestionable. Every one of them has tried to paint one colour of the Rainbow the total effect being एक सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति.

Yes, we have a number of faiths being followed in our country, and they are the petals of one Lotus-Indian Culture, ' A Confluence of Religions '.

He is that power to redeem man and thus pay the price of sin, which is an infinite debt. Sin is an offence against God in the ultimate analysis, and only an infinite God can repair the damage and harm done.

Hence the essence of Christianity consists not in obeying a set of commands, nor in submiting to certain laws, but in being recreated, re-made and incorporated in Christ Risen, not dead.

Christ had a pre-history. The place of His birth, the city in which he would dwell, the time of his comming, the manner of His death, all were foretold by the prophets of the Jewish people, whom God chose as His instrument for the salvation of man. Christ is not primarily a teacher of humanitarian ethics, but essentially and primarily a Redeemer and a Saviour. Everyone comes into this world to live. He came into it to die. Death is a stumbling block and a dread to many. To Christ it was the goal of His Life. Suffering is always the form that love takes in an evil situation. Every mother who even had a drunkard husband knows that. How else should Divine Love meet sin except by the cross? Sin broke the heart of God. " Greater love than this no man has than that a man lays down his life for his friends " (Jn. 15, 33).

Jesus Christ is true God and true man. On Thursday after the arrest of Christ, He was brought before a midnight meeting at the house of Caiphas. The false witness failed to agree and atlast the High Priest stood up, put Jesus on oath and as God's representative asked Him solemnly : " I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God ". Jesus said to him, " You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.. " (Mt. 26, 63-64) The high priest rent his garments as a sign of horror at the blasphemy, and with great clamour they all agreed to pass sentence of death. That he was man is a historical fact recorded in history. He was a good man as can be judged by his conduct and deeds. A good man never lies, and so his statement is true as regards his divinity.

Christ the Saviour :

Chirist is the Redeemer of mankind. As God He was sinless, yet " He was made sin for us ". By coming into a world of sin, He, the Sinless One, brought the whole weight of its sin upon His Person. Jessus Christ offered his life in propitiation for each and every sin committed. An infinite debt to God, could only be paid by an infinite God on the cross. Thus He brought man to God and God to man in Himself. A careful study of the gospels reveal that only through His suffering and death could the Kingdom of God be fully established and men reinstated under the authority of God. " If I be lifted up, I will draw all things to myself ". The Cross is meaningful only because we are sinners and the love of the Cross is manifest because He loved us while we were sinners.

We know that Christ died. It is a historical fact. Did He rise from the dead as he Himself had foretold ? Jesus had told His apostles of His death and Resurrection. On the Sunday morning after His death Christ rose from the dead by His own Power. St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15, 17, states : " If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins ".

Christ establishes His Church :

How can I contact Christ the Redeemer ? How does he save me ? How do I come in contact with His Truth and His will ? How do I receive His life? Do I contact Him as an individual or do I contact Him in fellowship and in community ? On the day when Peter confessed that Christ was the Son of the Living God, Christ answered : " You are Peter, and upon this rock I shall build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ". Thus the Church was founded. Christ said that this Church would start small, like a mustard seed, but it would grow into a great tree, " so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof " (Mk 4 : 32) It would be a new society with its own ideals, purposes and goals different from the world, and hence it would be hated by the world as its founder, was hated. Its number would be so closely united to each and everyone in Him that if anyone did any kind of act to anyone

like giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, they would be doing it for Him. The unity between Christ and His Church would be like the unity between the vine and its branches.

The new Church or body would not be like a club which is formed by men coming together to a centre for a common purpose. Rarer, it was to be like a living body from whose centre life radiates. If there was any human analogy for this Church it was the human body. As the body is composed of millions of tiny cells, each one living its own individual life, and yet no one is able to live apart from the body, so this new Church would be made up of millions of individuals who are incorporated into Christ. Just as one cell is not another, as an arm is not a leg, as an eye is not the ear, so the priest is not the teacher, or the Religious Sister is not the family. Yet all their different functions contribute to the order and beauty of the order and beauty of the whole body, because it has one visible head, the Rock, viz the Pope, and one soul which is the Spirit of God.

The nucleus of this Body was the Apostles, the companions of Jesus. They were destined to spread out over the world, teaching all nations. His teaching was not confined to his apostles alone. It was for all time and for all generations. Hence, He gave to his Church, His Truth, His Power and His Sanctification. "I am the truth" (Jn. 14.6), He said. He also said, "He who hears you, hears me and he who rejects you, rejects me", and "he who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me" (Lk 10, 16). When, therefore, the Church teaches, it will be He who is teaching through it. Since it is God's truth, it will necessarily be infallible or free from error.

The same was true of His Authority. "And Jesus coming, spoke to them saying: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always to the

close of the age." (Mt 28, 18-20). This Divine Authority He communicated to the visible head of His Church when He made Peter the head and then added: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven". (Mt 16, 19).

Finally, His Sanctionification and Priesthood He communicated to His Church. He forgave sins, so much so that the Scribes and Pharises questioned his Power to pardon sinners. He said : " If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained ".

On Pentecost day, Christ sent upon the Apostles the Holy Spirit of God after His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven. The Acts of the Apostles state : " When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. " (Acts 2, 1-4). The Church started to function and act from that day. Thus the work of redemption could go on.

Sin and its Effects :

Is there a higher life than the natural life we lead ? Is it possible to know truths beyond the power of our reason and our experience ? Could we have strength in moments of crisis, temptations, sorrow and trial ? Could we enjoy another life than our purely human life and thus possess peace, which the world cannot give ?

We have no right to say that there is no higher life than the physical life we now live, any more than the dog or cat say that there is no life above it. When God made the dog and cat He gave them all the essentials for their nature, which makes a dog a dog, and a cat a cat. So when God made us, He owed it to Himself to endow us with all that makes us human beings;

having a body and soul endowed with reason and free-will. He was not obliged to make us share His nature any more than He was obliged to make a tree to speak or a stone to walk. On the other hand, we have no right to claim a higher life above the natural if it exists.

In the Book of Genesis, we read: " God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them " (Gen 1.27) He settled them in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it. He gave them the admonition not to eat only of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve, the first parents, did not obey God's command. With their sin the whole human race suffered. We are, therefore, born in the state of original sin. This is something like a severe illness which has upset our nature, with the result that there is a civil war going on inside us, our body rebelling against our soul.

God's Grace and the Sacraments.

Christ by His death on the Cross and Resurrection atoned for man's sins, and thus He pulled down the barriers which separated us from Him. By bringing Divine Life into history, He made it possible for us in some way to receive it, as He said: " I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. " (Jn 10,10). How does this Divine Life change my nature? The answer is if Christ infused that life in me, just as He sent the Holy Spirit of God upon the apostles, likewise He sends the same Spirit on us. John, the evangelist writes: " And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him, you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. " (Jn. 14, 16-17).

If the risen Christ sends His Spirit into souls to restore them to His Friendship it would be purely gratuitous on His part and being gratis or a gift, it could appropriately be called " grace ". James the apostle in his letter says " Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the

Father of lights....." These supernatural gifts which the Holy Spirit, through the merits of Jesus Christ. pours into our soul, enables us to know more than we knew before, to love more than we loved before, and to do things which we could not do by our natural powers ".

By God's grace we are made partakers of divine nature, as God's life and activity is in us. In virtue of this, we grow up to be His children. How can one receive this gift of a higher life? What effect will it have? We must die to our sinful nature, and this can be done by sacrifice and suffering. " Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life ". (Jn 12, 24-25).

A Christian is born of Christ, so that poor, weak, sinful human nature is re-created and becomes a " new creature ". Even with this infusion of Divine Life we do not loose our freedom. Our free will has an important role to play in our lives. Grace does not work like a coin in a slot machine. Grace will move us only when we want it to move us and only when we let it move us. The supernatural order supposes the freedom of the natural order, but it does not destroy it. An alarm clock will awaken us in the morning, but it will not make us get up. Similarly, Gods grace will aid, directly and perfect our human actions, but only on condition that we freely co-operate with it.

To live a new life above the human is the test of a good Christian because he has been regenerated. The life of the body is the soul; the life of the soul is Christ. Once by an act of will we make God's life our own, we live by a new Spirit, we are governed by new laws, and have an entirely new set of values.

Christ Jesus knew the weakness of human nature. So to bring the materials of a chaotic world again in the divine order, he instituted the Sacraments. A Sacrament is a material sign or symbol through which God communicates His divine life.

Through them He pours into our souls the very life He purchased for us on the Cross. There are seven Sacraments five refer to our individual lives and two to our social lives.

1. To live a natural life one must be born to it. So also to live the Christ - life one has to be born to it. That is the Sacrament of Baptism by which we are regenerated in Christ.

2. As one cannot lead a perfect natural life unless one grows to maturity and assumes responsibilities of one's state of life, so one cannot lead a perfect supernatural life unless one grows into the full responsibilities of the Christian life. This is the Sacrament of Confirmation which infuses special gifts of the Holy Spirit, viz. wisdom, understanding, courage, fear of God, judgement, knowlege and reverence.

3. As one cannot live a natural life without nourishment, so also one cannot lead a supernatural life without nourishment. This is the Holy Eucharist in which one receives the Bread of Life which unites the person to Christ and to all who eat that Bread in the fellowship of the Body of Christ.

4. When one suffers wounds to one's natural life, one must be healed. When one's supernatural life is wounded by sin, one must obtain pardon. That is the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation.

5. If one suffers from a serious sickness or disease, a cure is needed. So also when one's soul is diseased through sin, the remains of sin should be removed. That is the Sacrament of the Sick.

6. As the natural life is perfected by propagation of the human species, so the supernatural life of the God's kingdom is perfected by raising children for God. That is the Sacrament of marriage.

7. Finally, as our natural life must be lived under law and government, so also our supernatural life must be lived under spiritual government and God's law. That is the Sacrament of Holy orders or the priesthood.

Life Hereafter :

Since we have a body and soul we can make either one the master. We can make the body serve the soul which is Christ's way, or we can make the soul serve the body which is the worldly way. It is that choice which makes the difference in life. There would be no point in organising games if there were no winners and loosers. There would be no point in fighting if there were no victors and vanquished. Likewise, there would be no point in life unless there were great and eternal destinies at stake. There will eventually come a moment in our lives when this trial will be over. Modern minds do not like to learn about death much less about what happens after death. A good and happy death is a masterpiece, and no masterpiece was ever perfected in a day. The greatest reason why we fear death is because we have never prepared for it. After death there is no remedy for an evil life. But before death there is a remedy. There is no other way of entering into a higher life except by dying to the lower.

Whether we like it, or not, there is no escaping the truth contained in the words of Paul : " It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgement ". (Heb. 9, 27). What is judgement ? Judgement is a recognition. Two souls appear before the judgement seat of God, one is in the state of grace, the other is not. The judge sees the resemblance of His nature in one and not in the other. It is as difficult to make a free nation without judges and prisons, as it is to make a free world without Judgement and hell. Christ, therefore, meant what He said : " Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels " (Mt. 25,41). Hell is a place where there is no love, for God is love. It is a place of eternal punishment. Our souls have a craving for happiness. Time bound happiness is disappointing when it ends, but a timeless happiness is satisfying. Hence to be with God for eternity is heaven. Paul writes : " What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him. " (1 Cor. 2. 9).

The point of view of Catholics differs on important subjects as pain, sorrow, sin, happiness, marriage, children, education, the purpose of life, the meaning of death, birth control, euthanasia, etc. from those who do not have Divinie Faith to guide them. We may be living in different worlds. It may appear that those who have faith, have surrendered both their freedom and reason by obeying the laws of the Church and accepting the truth of Christ in His Church. What, therefore. is this faith ?

1. Faith is the acceptance of a truth on the authority of God revealing it. Faith is a supernatural virtue, whereby, inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe as true those things which He revealed, not because the truth of these things is clearly evident from reason alone, but because of the authority of God who cannot deceive nor be deceived. Faith is never blind.

2. Faith is a gift of God. It is God who sows the seed. Paul says : " For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God ". (Eph 2:8)

Faith will answer the principal problems of life : Why ? Whence ? Whither ? It can enlarge your knowledge, for there are many truths beyond the power of reason.

Natural hope makes the will tend towards an object of its desires e. g. the farmer cultivates his crops in the hope of a harvest, so supernatural hope makes the will strive towards God, and its own happiness. God foresees and knows everything that happens from all eternity. He either wills it or He permits it. God permits evil for a greater good related to His love and the salvation of our souls. On our part we should fulfill God's will as made known to us by the scriptures, and the teaching body of the Church.

Hate, violence and murder dates back to the beginning of history, What is the antidote to this ? Supernatural love alone which is a gift of God by which we are enabled to love Him above all things for His own sake alone and in that love to

love all that he loves. This is true charity. It is in the will, not in the emotions. It is a habit and not a spasmodic act. It is a love-relationship not a contract, you can like those who like you, but you can love those who dislike you. If love of God and neighbour become a habit of our soul, we are developing heaven within us. Religion is a relationship, not a contract. It begins with love which is a supernatural relation between God and our soul and our neighbour. Luke writes in his gospel : " You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all yovr strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself ". (Lk. 10, 27). In this spirit we are to understand the words of Christ : " Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you ". (Lk. 6, 27-28),

The essence of Christianity was taught by Christ Jesus Himself in his Sermon on the Mount.

" Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persrcuted the prophets who were before you ". (Mt 5. 3-11)

✠ ✠ ✠

Fundamentals of Hinduism

J. C. Haran

I bow with deep reverance to my Sadguru Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, Gurudev Ranade and saints and sages of all religions and my salutations to you all.

This evening I am asked to speak on the fundmentals of Hinduism. Before going into the fundamentals of Hinduism, I would reaffirm my faith that these fundamentals are same in all Religions. All religious scriptures are the words of God and all great teachers whe represented God and spoke to humanity, spoke from their level of conciousness. What they said wao received and understood at the level of the listener, which was absolutely the very physical human level. Therefore, they were not able to recognise or comprehend the deeper spiritual truths revealed by these saints. As time passes the gap between the message and the understanding of it widens. Thus misunderstandings grew.

To write an example : a teacher was trying to teach music and said " To sing well you should havs a clear throat. " One of the students who heard him immediately got up, proceeded to wasn his throat and came back. Though the teacher meant a set of well trained vocal cords, which can produce the required voice with necessary modulation of is great advantage to a musician, the student with his kind of background understood it only at the level of washing the throat.

Similarly another misconception is if the language in which the scripture is written is known, one can read and easily understand it. This again is not true. Knowing English does not mean someone can read and understand Einsteins Theory of Relativity. Similarly knowing Sanskrit does not mean that one can read and understand the Upanishads; knowing English does not mean one can read and understand the Bible or knowing Arabic does not mean that one can read

and understand the Koran. What is needed is the training in the basics of the same subject; some experience in the same field becomes necessary before one can understand the deeper aspect of the subject.

Now having understood these aspects let us carefully look into and see the distinguishing features of Hinduism. I would speak on Hinduism as I have understood it and not as scriptures seem to project it. That is all anyone can do. The vast ocean of knowledge is there and if a cup is put in it, it can collect only its own capacity and not anymore. So when I collect from the ocean of knowledge, what I gain is only what I can hold and that is all that I can convey to you. If that becomes very limited and you do not gain much I beg your forgiveness.

The way I looked at Hinduism I find it having more similarities with other religions. We normally say that Hinduism has no prophet to start with. On careful enquiry we see that it is not true. Clearly, Lord Rama was the first prophet with Valmiki as his apostle. The life and teachings of Rama was written by Valmiki in the form of Ramayana. Later we have Srikrishna with Vyasa as his apostle, who wrote the teachings of Srikrishna in the Mahabharatha and Bhagavatha. Later also the religion was supported by prophets. During a further decline of Hinduism it was Adishankara who came and reclaimed the old lost knowledge.

Coming to the next point, the Hindu religion also teaches that there is only one God. More profoundly the religion has its basis on the monistic reality which is called Brahma and the purpose of the religion is to teach each individual soul a definite way to realise this infinite nature. Not only that it urges each devotee to take it as the most important aspect of their life. Like in the Bhagavad Geeta Lord Krishna says,

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ।
(XVIII 66)

(Abanding all duties seek me alone. I will liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve)

At a later period, when learning Sanskrit grammar was considered the most important thing to do, Adi Sankara said,

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं भज मूढमते।
संप्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले नहि नहि रक्षति डुकृञ करणे ।

(Seek Govind, Seek Govind, Seek Govind O Fool! When the time for reckoning comes (death) rules of grammar will not save you)

In the recent times Swami Vivekananda said "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached". Obiviously the goal is knowing God and no lesser goal. My Guruji Paramahansa Yogananda said "Every thing else can wait; but your search for God cannot wait ".

This is true of other religions too. In the Bible Lord Jesus says " Seek thee first the kingdom of God, everything else will be added on to thee ".

Now this goal to be reached some particular procedure need to be followed. I would say the distinguishing feature of Hindu religion is that it advocates a particular path to be followed depending on the evolution of the individual soul. This assumes the concept that individualised soul has to reincarnate for many times before it can reach and experience the ultimate reality. This concept of reincarnation is inherent in all religions, but in Hindu scriptures it is very explicitly stated. Following are examples.

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोपराणि
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णानि
अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देहि ।

(Bhagavad Geeta II-22)

" Just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, the soul casts off worn out bodies and enters new body "
In the Bhaja Govindam Adi Sankara states

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं
पुनरपि जननीजठरे शयनम् ।

इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे
कृपया ऽ पारे पाहि मुरारे ।।

(Again birth, again death and again lying in mother's womb. Thus Sansara process is very hard to cross over. Save me Murare through thy infinite kindness)

By living through many lives we gain experience and that helps one to rebuild the nervous system to a refinement which is needed to experience God in ourselves. The stages through which the soul goes, in its process of evolution, is broadly classified into the four castes. Since it is very thoroughly misunderstood and practiced wrongly I would use a parable of Jesus Christ to elucidate.

A farmer went out to sow. Some of his seeds fell by the wayside and were trodden by feet and were eaten by birds. Some seeds fell on the rock and withered away because they could not take root. Some seeds fell among throns and plants and were chocked when they grew. Some fell on the good soil and flourished and brought forth abundant fruits.

By analogy, the seeds are the spiritual truths spoken by the prophets. The different soils are the different type of people who hear the truth. The first type who hear, because they have their own beliefs, will not even listen. The people represented by the rock are those who listen to the truth, but would not practice it in their lives because of the vanity in him. The third type of people are those who have the truth and want to practice it. But their spiritual efforts are chocked by their physical nature and so they are unable to fully manifest their spiritual nature. But the last category of people are those who receive the message with an open heart, a clear and unbiased mind and practice it in their own lives, and manifest the divinity in them.

Let us now understand more clearly what exactly the caste system stands for. The four castes are the Sudra, Vaisya, Kshatriya and Brahmana. The four types of people indicated by the parable can be likened to these four castes. Another way of understanding is by the qualities predominant in the

people. Sudra is one in whom the Tamasic qualities predominate. Vaisya is one in whom both Tamasic and Rajasic qualities are dominant. Kshatriya is one in whom both Rajasic and Satwic qualities predominate. Brahmana is one in whom the Satwic qualities predominate. The importance of the caste system is that knowing your nature by introspection you would be able to choose the right practice by which you would reach the ultimate reality fastest.

Another important aspect of Hindu religion is that it not only gives us the idea of evolution of soul but also the idea of the evolution of earth. Yugas indicate the evolutionary stage of the earth. Yuga is a wonderful concept which is evolved from the Hindu astronomy. Though we attribute many of the astronomical discoveries to the west, our Indian astronomy itself was much better developed in the earlier days. According to Indian astronomy the moons revolve around the planet, the planets with their moons around the sun, the sun with the planets and moons revolve around another major star and this star revolve around what is called Vishnu Nabhi or the grand centre which is supposed to be the seat of spiritual wisdom and creative power.

During the revolution the sun comes closer to and moves away from the Vishnu Nabhi. Sun being close to Vishnu Nabhi is a period of spiritual evolution and it being farthest is the period of spiritual ignorance. The 12000 years taken by the sun to move from the closest to farthest point is divided into four Yugas. 1200 years when the sun is far from the Vishnu-nabhi is called Kaliyuga. As it moves closer to Vishnu nabhi the next 2400 years is called Dwapara yuga; next 3600 years is called Treta yuga and closest 4800 years is called Satya yuga. Rama lived in the last Treta yuga and Krishna in the Dwapara yuga. With proper calculations it can be shown that presently it is 287 Dwapara yuga and the sun is moving closer to Vishnunabhi since sun is moving closer to the grand centre there is advancement in all fields, and we are progressing in all fields day by day. (for more details kindly refer Holy Science by Swami Sri.Yukteswar Giri, published by Yogoda Satsanga Society Ranchi)

Sun moving closer to the Vishnunabhi has caused a growing awareness of the spiritual knowledge also. Interestingly Adisankara was born just as sun started its motion towards the grand centre. A deeper understanding of the spiritual truth has become possible. Today it is rather easy to get initiated into the spiritual path. In most places you can see enough spiritual organisation which propagate the spiritual knowledge.

Now let us come to the discussion on the practices in Hinduism. All these practices are armed at bringing one back to the realisation of God. Today we are better equipped to know God in a scientific way. When I say scientific way, I do not mean that God can be known by using scientific instruments. That is just not possible. What I mean is that some procedures are given and the results on carrying them out are varifyable. God, being the single reality, can not be sepraratad and known, but can be known only by merging with it, becoming one with it.

Every religious book says that you are the children of the Most High. That is every soul is an individualised part of God. Since we have separated ourselves from this divinity it is our job to strive and go back. An anology would explain it better. Suppose, while transfering mercury one droplet fell down. This droplet which fell down will collect enough dirt around it. If this droplet is put back into the original mercury bottle it will not mix with the mercury in it because of the dust covering it. Similarly, every individualised soul which has separated and have come into Samsara or worldly life has collected Karmic dust around it. This Karmic dust has to be removed if oneness with God has to be realised. How can it be done ? In case of mercury, if the dirt is removed with the help of a cloth, it may remove some dirt and add some dirt. That is exactly what happens when one comes into the world. Some of the Karmic dust are removed and in the process a few more are collected. There has to be a process by which Karmic dust can be removed. In the case of mercury it is done by passing it through chamois leathers. Identically human life lived through the guidance of a

Guru, not letting the ego retard it would clear itself of the Karmic dust. How this happens is beautifully explained in the stanza from Bhajagovindam.

सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वं निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वं
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्व निश्चलतत्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥

(Through the company of the good, there arises non-attachment, through non-attachment there arises freedom from delusion, from freedom comes the awareness of immutable reality there comes the state of liberated life.)

So to start with one has to develop detachment. Detachment, again is a word which is not correctly understood. Detachment means living every moment with full awareness and not being absent minded. To develop this awareness one can follow the practices like entering a place with the right foot, giving something with right hand and so on. It is not that the right hand is better than the left hand. What is important is that one is hundred percent aware of what one does. How this can be achieved and the importance of Guru can be better understood if we analyse the first stanza of the Bhagavad Gita.

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरूक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥

(Assembled in the sacred plain of Kurukshetra, what did my children and Pandu's children do?)

It is a beautiful stanza. It has always been questioned as to how the first chapter of Bhagavad Geeta belongs to it. Bhagavad Geeta is supposed to be the advice of Sreekrishna to Arjuna. But Sreekrishna does not utter a single word in the chapter. He speaks only in the second chapter. Then why is it also forming part of Bhagavad Gita ?

In the story of Mahabharata, Sreekrishna gives Sanjaya the power to sit in the room with Dhritharastra and see the war taking place in Kurukshetra, so that he can describe it to Dhritharashtra. Shreekrishna could have given the power to Dhritharashtra himself. Why was this not done ? Vyasa is a very intelligent writer and whatever he writes even the seemingly

simplest ones have deep implication. It is clear from the question of Dhritharashtra where he asks "; My children and Pandu's children...? " So if he was given the power to see the war he would see only what his children were doing, and not the whole war. And this is true of us also. We also look at things with our bias and not impartially. But to start on the spirituat path what is needed is to introspect impartially. What are my drawbacks ? What are my qualities ? The first chapter then goes on to explain how the discriminative qualities should be used to overcome the weakness. That is the importance of the first chapter.

Now, why should one introspect? By introspection one can find one's strength and weakness. And if this is not done impartially one cannot get the right assessment. Hence a Guru would be of tremendous help. Guru is an independent person who has the welfare of the disciple in mind. And he can help one assess one's nature and the level of one's evolution. If one is in the lower most level of spiritual evolution the easiest way is to chant the name of God and serve those who are more evolved.

Surprisingly, chanting the name of God has become very formal and has sort of taken one away for God. Sometimes I have felt Christian teachings are much better; because their prayers are more personal and intimate. Hindu religion also expects the same intimacy in chanting and praying. In western religious practices God is referred to as 'Father' Jesus Christ even said " Don't call a man on earth your father; your father is in heaven. " So we are all children of God. Whereas in Hindu practices God is normally referred to as the mother. The mother aspect is given more importance because the mother is closer to the child than the father. So by addressing God as mother one can get closer.

Let us now analyse the practice of chanting. Names used for chanting have a meaning representing the quality of God. While chanting one develops an appreciation of those qualities and imbibes them. Normally if one starts appreciating somebody one starts behaving as he does. So, one who chants imbibes these qualities of God one by one and finally manifests in oneself all the qualities of God.

One can manifest all qualities only in stages. Having gained some faith one would want to know God more profoundly. This faith can be blind faith too ! And even that is very scientific. Any knowledge is based on blind faith. Even in Science it is true. In the school one is taught 1+1=2. If at that stage one asked a question how is 1+1=2 he would have got a good spanking from his teacher rather than an explanation. But on this blind faith of 1+1=2 one can build up rational and scientific theories. And the scientific knowledge is normally acquired in one life time itself. But the further complication which comes about the understanding of spiritual knowledge is that to acquire it fully one needs many lives.

So in the spiritual path one starts with the blind belief that a stone is God and giving a foundation of faith and then one's craving to know God grows. That makes one do more of ritualistic practices. After that one reads all the books which tell about God. This instead of satisfying him develops in him a deeper craving to know God. When this craving reaches a boiling point Guru comes to him.

The relation between God, Guru, the scriptures and the disciple is best brought out in the following stanza

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दन:
पार्थोवत्स: सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ।

(The Upanishads are the cows. the one who is milking is the son of the cowherd. Arjuna, the child of pure intellect is the consumer and what is being milked is the Geeta and is as great as Nectar).

Let us understand this stanza. The Upanishads are the cows. What does the cow do ? It eats grass and hay and gives you nutritious milk. Identically Upanishads uses ordinary experiences of life and gives one an idea of the spiritual knowledge. This analogy also makes it clear that if one looks superficially he will not find any similarity in spiritual teachings; one may even find contradictions Like a cow could be black or white in colour. But once the cow is milked it is seen that any cow would give the same nutritious milk. Similarly the essence

of all spiritual teachings are the same. How can one get at this essence ? Who can give you the milk ? Someone close to the cow. If someone goes directly the cow will kick you. The cowherd's child, who is close to the cow can do the milking for you. So you need someone who is close to God to give you the spiritual knowledge. If one indulges in spiritual practices without guidance he could be inviting trouble. And to whom is this milk given ? To Arjuna, the child of pure intellect. Most interpreters interprit Arjuna as the calf. I feel it is not correct because the calf can always go and directly drink the milk and would not need the intermediary. Whereas, when we say, " Arjuna the child of pure intellect, " it means a disciple who has an unbiased and clear mind willing to absorb what is taught. He does not have attachment to the already acquired knowledge to resist the new knowledge given to him. And finally what is the quality of the milk ? It is like nector. If you drink it and assimilate it you beccome immortal. That is true of spiritual knowledge too. Having assimilated it into your being you become immortal.

One more aspect of Hindu religion is the symbolism used in representing Gods. Let me take a very familiar example. Lord Vishnu is represented as lying on Ananta the coiled snake. with head turned inward. In all religions snake represents the mind which is active and its head directed outward shows that its attention is directed towards the external world. Here the snake is coiled, which means mind is made calm; the head is turned inward, which means the attention is now withdrawn from the external world and the gaze is directed inward and what you see is Lord Vishnu. That is in meditation, if one can calm the mind and then interiorise all energies he can experience God in himself. So deep spiritual truths are what is behind the funny looking symbols !

Here I conclude. I would feel having done my duty if these few words of mine brought you a better understanding of Hinduism and other religions.

Fundamentals of Islam

Mr. Shahid Mohammed

Every religion of the world has been named either after the name of its founder or after the community and the nation in which that religion took its birth. For instance Christianity takes its appellation from the name of its prophet Jesus Christ; Buddhism from its founder Gautam Buddha; Judaism, the religion of the Jews, from the name of the tribe Judha wherein it took its birth. Similar is the case with other religions. But not so with Islam. This religion enjoys the unique distinction of having no such association with any particular person or people. The word " Islam " does not convey any such relationship for it does not belong to any particular person, people or country. It is neither the product of any human mind nor confined to any particular community. It is a universal religion and its objective is to create and cultivate in man the quality and attitude of Islam.

' Islam ' as a matter of fact, is an atributive title. Whosoever possesses this attribute, may he belong to any race, community, country or clan, is a Muslim. According to the Quaran (the Holy Book of the Muslims) among every people and in all ages there have been good and righteous people who possessed this attribute and all of them were and are Muslims.

This automatically brings us to the question : What does Islam mean? And who is a Muslim?

" Islam " is an Arabic word and connotes submission, surrender and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah the Lord of the world and that is why it is called *Islam*.

Every one can see that the universe we live in is an orderly universe. There is law and order among all the units that comprise this universe. Everything is assigned a place in a

grand scheme which is working in a magnificent and superb way. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars and in fact all the heavenly bodies are knit together in a splendid system. They follow an unalterable law and do not make even the slightest deviation from their ordained course. The earth rotates on its own axis and its revolution round the Sun scrupulously follows the path laid down for it. Similarly everything in the world, from the little whirling electron to the mighty nebulae, invariably follows its own laws. Matter, energy and life all obey their own laws and grow and change and live and die in accordance with those laws. Even in the human world the laws of nature quite manifest. Man's birth, growth and life are all regulated by a set of biological laws. He derives sustenance from nature in accordance with an unalterable law. All the organs of his body from the small tissues to the heart and the brain are governed by the laws prescribed for them. In short ours is a law governed universe and everything in it is following the course that has been ordained for it.

This powerful, all-pervasive law, which governs all that comprises the universe, from the tiniest specks of dust to the magnificient galaxies in high heavens, is the law of God, the Creator and the Ruler of the Universe. As the entire creation obeys the law of God, the whole universe, therefore literally follows the religion of Islam for Islam signifies nothing but obedience and submission to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. Everything in the universe is ' Muslim ' for it obeys God by submission to His laws. Even a man who refuses to believe in God or offers his worship to someone other than Allah, has perforce to be a ' Muslim ' as far as his bodily existence is concerned. For his entire life, from the embryonic stage to the body's dissolution into dust after death, and every tissue of his muscles and every limb of his body follows the course prescribed for each by God's law.

This, in short, is the real position of man and the universe. Let us now examine the problem in a different light. Man is so constituted that there are two aspects of his life, two distinct spheres of his activity. One is the sphere in which he

finds himself totally regulated by the Divine law. He cannot budge an inch or move a step away from it. Nor can he evade it in any way or form. In fact, like all other creatures, he is completely caught in a grip of the law of nature and is bound to follow it. But there is another sphere of his activity as well. He has been endowed with reason and intellect. He has the power to think and form judgements, to choose and reject and to adapt and spurn. He is free to adopt whatever course of life he chooses. He can embrace any faith, adopt any way of life and formulate his living according to whatever ideologies he likes. In this latter aspect, he unlike the other creatures, has been given freedom of thought, choice and action.

Both these aspects distinctly co-exist in man's life. An individual who chooses to acknowledge his Creator, accepts Him as his real Master, honestly and scrupulously submits to His laws and injunctions and follows the code; he has revealed unto man for his individual and social life, thereby becomes a perfect Muslim. He has, so to say, achieved completeness in his Islam by consciously deciding to obey God in the domain in which he was endowed with freedom and choice. Now his entire life has become one of submission to God and there is no conflict in his personality. He is a perfect Muslim and his Islam is complete—for this submission of his entire self to the will of Allah is Islam and nothing but Islam.

He has now consciously submitted to Him Whom he already unconsciously obeyed. He has now willingly offered obedience to the Master, Whom he already owed obedience unintentionally. Now he is at peace with the whole universe for he worships Him Whom the whole Universe worships. Such a man is God's vicegerent on earth. The whole world is for him and hand he is fcr God.

But one who disobeys God is the person who perpetrates the greatest injustice, for he uses all these powers of body and mind given by God to rebel against the very course of

nature and become an unwilling instrument in the drama of disobedience. He forces his head to bow down before other beinges other than God and cherishes in his heart the love, reverence and fear of other powers in utter disregard of the instinctive urge of his organs. He uses his own powers and all those things upon which he has authority against the explicit will of God. After all, what is the reality of man ? What is his power and authority ? Is he himself the creator of his mind, his heart, his soul and other organs of his body—or have they been created by God ? Has he Himself created the universe and all that is within her—or it has been created by God ? Who has harnessed all the powers and energies for the service of man—man or God? If everything has been created by God and God alone, then to whom do they belong ? Who is their real owner ? Who is their rightful Sovereign ? Verily, it is God and none else. Man cannot harm God Almighty by disbeying him. He harms his own self, by his disobedience. Man treads the path of utter ruin and disgrace.

ISLAM means obedience to God. And it is a matter of commonsense that this obedience cannot ensure in full measure unless man knows certain basic facts of life and reposes firm faith in them. First of all one should have unshakable belief in the existence of God. Then, one must know the attributes of God. It is the knowledge of the attributes of God which enables man to cultivate in him the noblest of human qualities and to fashion his life in virtue and godliness.

Moreover, one must know in detail the way of living by following which one can seek the pleasure of God. Thus the knowledge of the Divine Law, and the Revealed Code of Life is also extremely essential in this respect. Finally one must also know the consequences of belief and obedience and those of disbelief and disobedience. Man must have an unwavering belief in the fact that death does not mean the end of life; that there will be resurrection and he will be brought to the highest court of justice, to be presided over by God Himself; that on the Day of Judgment complete justice will prevail; and that good deeds will be rewarded and the misdeeds punished.

Everybody will get his due and there is no running away from that. This is bound to happen. This sense of responsibility is quite essential for the full-fledged obedience of the Law of God.

Now the question arises : How acquire the knowledge and belief in God, His attributes, His Law and the Day Judgment ?

We can see that God has most graciously provided man all that he needs in this universe. Everything essential for his life is provided here in abundance—air, light, water and what not. All the material condition of survival and growth are provided for and he finds that the whole universe is at his service and is serving him on every turn and pass.

When God has provided man all this, He has also shown man through his chosen messangers the right path to tell man the purpose of creation and the meaning of life itself. What man himself is and why has he been created ? Who has provided him with all the powers and resources and why ? What are the proper ends of life and how are they to be achieved ? What are the proper values of life and how can they be attained ? This is the most cardinal need of man and unless he knows this he cannot erect the edifice of culture on sound foundations and cannot succeed in life here and hereafter. While God has produced men of distinction in arts, sciences, He has also raised men with deep vision, pure intuition and highest faculties to know and understand Him. To them, He himself revealed the way of Godliness, piety and reghteousness. He gave them the knowledge of the ends of life and values of morality and entrusted them with the duty to communicate the Divine Revelation to other beings and to show them the right path. These men are the prophets and Messengers of God.

Now let us cast a glance at the history of prophethood. Let us see how this long chain began, how it gradually unfolded itself and finally culminated in the prophethood of the last of the Prophets, Muhammad.

The human race began from one man : Adam. It was from him that the family of man grew and the human race multiplied. All human beings born in this world have descended from that

earlier pair; Adam and Eve. History and religion are agreed on this point. Most of the scientists also conjecture that one man would have been brought into existence first and the entire human race might have descended from the same one man.

Adam, the first man on earth, was also appointed as the first Prophet of God. He revealed His religion-Islam-to him and enjoined him to convey and communicate the same to his descendants; to teach them that Allah is One, the Creator the Sunstainer of the world; that He is the Lord of the universe and He alone should be worshiped and obeyed; that to him they will have to return one day and to Him alone they should appeal for help; that they should live good, pious and righteous life in accordance with God's pleasure and that if they did so they would be blessed by God with goodly reward, and if they turned away from Him and disobeyed Him they would be losers here and the hereafter and would be severely punished for this disbelief and disobedience.

Those of Adam's descendants who were good, trod the right path shown to them by him, but those who were bad, abandoned their father's teachings, and gradually drifted away into devious ways. Some began to worship the Sun, the Moon and the Star; others took to the worship of trees, animals and rivers. Some believed that air, water, fire, health and all the blessings and forces of Nature were each under the control of a different god and that each one of them should be propitiated by means of worship. In this way ignorance gave rise to many forms of polytheism and scores of religions were formulated Adam's progeny had spread fairly over the globe, and formed different races and nations. Every nation had made a different religion for itself, each with formalities and rituals of its own. God-the one Lord and the Creator of mankind and the universe was altogether forgotten. Not only that, but Adam's descendants forgot even the way of life which God had revealed for them and many evil customs and all sorts of notions of ignorance began to spread among them.

At this stage God began to raise prophets among every people, who preached Islam to them. God's true prophets were

raised in all countries; in every land and people. They had all one and the same religion, the religion of Islam, that is submission, surrender, and obedience to God the Creator of the Universe.

Man's attitude towards God's Prophets has been strange. First he maltreated the Prophets and refused to listen and accept their teachings. Some of the Prophets were expelled from their lands, some were assissinated. However, their patient determination at last succeeded; their teaching did not remain without effect. Large groups of people and nations accepted their message, and were converted to their creed. But the erring tendencies of the people born of centuries of persistence in deviation, ignorance and malpractice, now took another form. Though during the lives of their Prophets they accepted and practised their teachings, yet after their death they introduced their old distorted notions into their religions, and altered the Prophet's teachings. They adopted quite novel methods of worshipping God, some even took to the worship of their Prophets. Some made the Prophets the incarnations of God. Some associated their Prophet with God in his Divinity. Despite these attitudes by the followers, the work of the Prophets has not been altogether invain. Among all nations, in spite of all interpolations and alterations some traces of Truth have survived. The idea of God and of the life after death was definitely assimiliated in some form or the other. A few principles of goodness, truthfulness and morality were commonly admitted throughout the whole world. The Prophets, thus prepared the mental attitude of their respective people in such a way that a universal religion could be safely introduced a religion which is quite in consonance with the nature of man, which embodies all that was good in all other creeds and societies, and which is naturally and commonly acceptable to the entire mankind.

In the beginning separate Prophets used to appear among different nations or groups of people and the teaching of each prophet were meant specifically for that time and for his people. The reason was that at that stage of history, nations were situated separately and were so cut of from each other

that one was bound up within the geographical limits of its own territories and the-facilties for mutual intercourse were just non-existent. In such circumstances it was very difficult to propagate a common world. Faith with its accompaying system of law for the life of this world. It was therefore, necessary that different Prophets be raised to preach the Truth to the people and win them over to God's ways, and teach them to practice the noblest principles of simple, pious and righteous life, and thus train and bring them up in the arts and crafts of life. God alone knows how many thousands of years were spent in thus educating mankind, and developing them mentally, morally and spiritually. Anyhow, man continued to make progress and at last time came when mankind grew from its infancy, and entrered the age of maturity. With the progress and spread of commerce, industry and art, intetcouse was established between the nations. Many people learnt the art of wirting; knowledge and arts spread. Ideas began to be commnicated from one country to the other and learning and scholarship began to be exchanged. Great conquerors appeared, extended their conquests far and wide, established vast empires, and knit many different nations under one political system. Thus nations came closer and closer to one another and their differences became less and less.

It became possible under these circumstances that one and the same faith, envisaging a comprehensive and all embracing way of life, catering to the moral, spiritual, social, cultural, political, economic and all other needs of men and embodying both religious and secular elements be sent by God for the entire mankind. At such a crucial stage of human civilization, when the mind of man was itself hankering for world religion a prophet was raised in Arabia for the whole world and for all nations. The religion he was given to propogate was again Islam—but now in the form of a complete and fullfledged system, covering all aspects of individual and collective moral and material life of man. He was made a prophet for the entire human race and was deputed to propogate his mission to the whole world. He was Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam.

He was born in Arebia 1400 years ago at that time Arebia laid in darkness. It was a country without a Government each tribe claimed soveriegnity and considered itself to be an independent unit. There was no law except the law of jungle. Loot arson and murder of inocent and weak people had become order of the day. Life property and honour were constantly at stake. Different tribes were always daggers drawn with one another. As regards their religious beliefs they suffered from the same evils which were playing havock with the rest of the world. They worshiped stones, trees, idols, stars and spirits in short, everything conceivable except God. In such a dark and insuch belighted country a child is born. In his very childhood his parents die and few years later the sad demise of his grand-father also occurs. Consequently he is deprived even of that scant training and upbringing which an Arab child of his time could get. In his boyhood he tends the flocks of sheep and goats in the company of Bedouin boys, when of age he takes to commerce and his business dealings are with the Arabs alone whose condition has been just described. Education has not even touched him, he is completely unlettered and unschooled. But he is totally different from the people among whom he is born and with whom he passes his youth and early manhood attaining finally his full stature. He never tells a lie. His whole nation is unanimous in testifying to his truthfullness, he talks politely and never uses obscene and abusive language in his dealings with the people. He always follows the principles of justice and fair play. Those who deal with him in business have full confidence in his honesty and integrity. The entire nation calls him " Al-Ameen " (the truthful and trustworthy). He is on embodiment of the modesty and virtue. He is so clear minded and possess such a pure soul that he regards nothing in the heavens and the earth worth worshiping except the one true God.

After spending a great part of his life in such a chaste pure and civilised manner there comes a revolution in his being. He feels fed-up with the darkness and ignorance masked around him. He wants to swim clear of the horrible sea of ignorance, corruption, immorality, idolatery and disorder which surrounds

him on all sides. He finds everything around him out of harmony with his soul. He retires to the hills, away from the hum and drum of habitation. He spends days and nights in perfect seclusion and meditation. He fasts so that his soul and and his heart may become pure and nobler still. Then a remarkable revolution comes over his person. His heart is elumina-ted with divine life giving to him the power he had yearned for. He comes out of the confinement of his cave. Goes to the people and addresses them in the following strain. The idols which you worship are false. Cease to worship them from now onwards. No mortal being, no star, no tree, no stone, no spirit is worthy of human worship. The entire universe with everything that it contains belongs to God almighty alone. He alone is the creator, the nourisher, the sustainer and consequently the real sovereign before whom all should go down and to whom all should pray and render obidience. Leave all the voices in which you indulge for they are crimes in the eyes of God Speak the truth. Be just. Do not kill anyone. Do not rob any one. You are human being and all human beings are equal in the eyes of God. He alone is high and honoured who is God fearing and pious, true inwords and deeds. Distinctions of birth and glory of race are not criteria of greatness and honour. There is an appointed day after your death when you shall have to appear before your Lord and account for all your deeds. The whole record of your life shall be an open book to him, your fate shall be determined by your good and bad actions. True faith and good deeds alone will stand you in good stead at that time. He who will be fully equipped with them shall take him above in heaven of eternal happiness while he who will be devoid of them shall be cast in the fire of hell.

This is the message with which he comes. The ignorant nation turns against him. He is tortured troubled and persecuted for 13 long years. At last he is exiled but he is not given respite even there. He is tormented in various ways even in his abode of refuge. The whole Arabia is insighted against him, he suffers it all but does not budge an inch from the stand he has taken; he is resolute, firm and inflexible in his purpose and

his mission. His nation offers to accept him as its king and to lay down the riches of the land at his feet if only he would leave preaching his religion and spreading his message, but he refuses the tempting offers and suffers for this cause. This faith, this preserverance and this resolution with which he laid his movement to ultimate sucess is therefore an eloquent proof of the supreme truth of his cause.

This is one side of the revolution wrought in his being. The other is even more wonderful and remarkable. For 40 years he lived as an Arab among Arabs in that long period he was not known as statesman preacher or an orator nor had heard him imparting gems of wisdom and knowledge; as he began to do thereafter. He was never seen discoursing upon the principles of metaphysics, ethics, law, politics, economics and sociology. Not to speak of being a great military general, he was not even known as an ordinary solider; he had uttered no word about the God, the angels, the revealed books, the early prophets. the bygone nations, the day of judgements, the life after death, hell and heaven. When he began preaching his message the whole of Arabia stood in awe and wonder and was bewitched by his wonderful eloquence and oratory. He now appeared before his people as unique philosopher, a wonderful reformer a reknown moulder of culture and civilisation, an illustrious politician, a great leader, a judge of highest eminence and an incomparable general. This unlettered bedouin, this dweller of the desert spoke with such learning and wisdom the like of which none had said before and none could say after him. This reserved and quite man who for full 40 years never gave proof of any political interest or activity appeared suddenly on the stage of the world as such a great political reformer and statesman without the aid of radio and wireless and press. He brought together the scattared inhabitants of a desert of Twelve hundred thousand square miles under one banner, one law, one culture, one civilization and one form of government. He changed their modes of thoughts their very habits and morals, he turned the evil doers and bad chracters into pious god fearing and righteous persons. He accomplished this fear not through any wordly lure, oppression or cruelty but by his captivating manners, his enduring

moral personality and his convincing teachings. Inspite of the fact that he became the ruler of his country, he was so self-less and modest that he remained very simple and sparing his habits he lived poorly as before in a humble thatched mud cottage. He slept on a matress, wore corse clothes ate the simplest food of the poor and some times went without food at all. He used to spend whole nights standing in prayer before his lord. Like an ordinary man he would sit and walk with people and share their joy and sorrows. He would so mix-up and mingle with the crowd that a stranger, an outsider would find it difficult to single out the leader of the people and the ruler of the nation from the rest of the company.

The achievements of this great man dc not end here. In order to arrive at a correct appraisal of his true worth one has to view it in the background of the history of the world as a whole.

Arthur Leonard, a great historian says " Islam in fact has done a work. She has left a mark on the pages of human history which is so indeliable that it can never be effaced that only when the world grows, will it acknowledge in full ". John Deven Port, a leading scientist observed " It must be owned that all the knowledge wheather of physics, astronomy, philosophy or mathematics which flourished in Europe from the 10th century was originally derived from the Arabian school and Spanish Saracen may be looked upon as the father of European philosophy.

Burtrand Rusell, the famous philosopher writes " The supremacy of the East was not only military. Science philosophy, poetry and the arts all flourished in the Mohamedan world at a time when Europe was sunk in barbarism. Europeans with unpardenable insularity call this period " the dark ages " but it was only in Europe that it was dark. Indeed only in Europe, Spain which was Mohamedan had a briliant culture. Robert Briffault the renowned historian acknowldges in his book the *Making of humanity* "There is not a single aspect of human growth in which the decesive influence of Islamic culture is not traceble. What we call science rose in Europe as a result of the

new method of investigation, of the method of experimental observation, measurement and the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced to the European world by the Arabs. Stan Wood Cobb founder of the Progressive Education Association says " Islam was the virtual creator of the renaissance in Europe. "

Dr. Michel Hart in his book "The hundred" sketches tha lives of those hundred persons who have left an indelible mark on the pages of the human history. He rates prophet Mohamad on top of the list as the first among the hundred. M. N. Roy the great communist thinker and scholar of repute in his book "Historical influence of Islam on the world" says, "The revolution that Islam brought was not only great but the only one of its kind in the history of the world as it was not only a spiritual revolution but also a social one. "

Inspite of all these remarkable achievements Mohamad never proclaimed himself to be God or called himself the incarnation of God. He said I am a human being like yourselves I have not brought anything to you of my own accord. It has been revealed to me by God. Whatever I possess belongs to Him. This message the like of which the whole humanity is not able to produce, is the message of God. Every word of it has been set down by him and all glory to him whose message it is. All the wonderful achievements which stand to my credit in your eyes are all the laws which I have given, all the principles that I have thought none of them is from me. I find myself throughly incompetant in producing such thing out of my sheer personal ability. I look to divine guidance in all matters whatever he wills I do, what He directs I proclaim.

Any human being who studies without bias his, life and teachings will testify that verily he was the prophet of God and Quran, the book he gave to mankind is the true book of God.

Another very important tenet of Islam in which prophet Mohamad asked us to believe and without which Islam is not complete, is the belief in all the prophets of God sent down from time to time for the guidence of the mankind and the

books God has revealed to them. The Qurran says that the books were sent to prophet Abraham. The Torah was given to Moses, the Zabur was given to David and the Injeel (Gospel) was revealed to prophet Jesus. The Qurran also informs us that the earlier books of God have been changed by the people and do not exist in their true and complete form. The Quran also states that all the messengers of God belong to the same category and stand at par with each other.

The Muslims are therefore not permitted to say anything against the holy men of the past of other religions. It is quite possible that some of them may have been God's prophets. At the same time Muslims are asked to believe in prophet Mohamad and to follow him alone. This is because he is the last among the chain of prophets. He has been sent as a prophet for the whole world and for all times to come.

The guidance imparted through the prophets of the past was not complete and all embrassing. Every prophet was followed by another who effected alterations and additions in the teachings and injunctions of his predecessors and this way the chain of reform and progress had continued, that is why the teachings of earlier prophets after a lapse of certain period of time were either mixed up changed or lost. Obviously there was no need of preserving former teachings when amended and improved guidance had taken their place. At last the most perfect code of guidence was imparted to mankind through prophet Mohamad and all earlier codes were automatically abrogated for it is fulile to fotlow an incomplete code while the complete code exists.

Not only was prophet Mohamad born in the full blaze of history but his teachings, his biography, his discources, his way of living, his morals, habits and virtues in short all the details of his life and work are preserved in such a manner that no such example can be given of any leader or personality in the entire recorded history of the world. Thus even to day he is a living personality whose every foot step can be followed correctly and confidently.

Quran the book of God revealed to prophet Mohamad is the complete code of life. It is fully preserved and exists in its original text without the slightest difference of letter, syllable jot or title so much so that even critics of Islam concede and agree to this point. That is why it is now incumbent upon every Muslim to have faith in prophet Mohamad As a true messenger of God and follow him alone.

Apart from belief in the unity of God, belief in the prophets of God and the books he has sent down, belief in porphet Mohamad and belief in the Quran the word of God, *belief in life after death* is an important article of faith in Islam. This is so because the denial of life after death makes all other beliefs meaning-less. This denial also distroys the very sanction of good life and man is driven to a life of ignorance and disbelief. A man who has in view the sucess or failure of this world alone will be concerned with benefits and harms that accrue to him in this life only; he will not be prepared to undertake any good act if he has no hope of gaining there by some worldly interests nor he will be keen to avoid any wrong act, if that is not injurious to his interests in this world. If we reflect still deeper we will come to the conclusion that belief in life after death is the greatest deciding factor in the life of a man. Its acceptance or rejection determines the very course of our life and behaviour. If we look at it rationally also this seems correct. In this world of ours we see so many persons committing henious crimes and yet they escape the clutches of law only because they have power and wealth; where else many truthful honest persons have to suffer and live a life of poverty. Our common sense demands that there has to be some one and there must come a time when the criminals and tyrants and opressors and the evil doers are brought to book they are caught and punished according to the intensity and severity of their crimes. And the weak and the inocent the truthful and the honest, the pious and godfearing are rewarded in a just manner. The Quran says this world will come to an end one day, the sun will loose its brightness that God will destroy and anninilate the universe and in its place will evolve another higher and far superior cosmos.

Today scientists agree that a time will come when the sun will become cold and give up all his energy, the stars will colide with one another and the whole system of the universe will be upset and distroyed.

The Quran also says that the record of all the actions of man in this world is preserved and will be presented on the day of the judgement. Today science confirms this fact also that when we speak sound waves are produced and they leave their impression on the surrounding objects. In the same way science also confirms the fact that every action a man does remains in the form of an imprint in the universe.

When man can bring the words and actions of the people staying around the globe thousands of the kilometres away through radio and television, is it not in the power of God, who has created man and the entire universe to bring back every action and every word of man which has been preserved in the universe ?

After considering all these points no reasonable person can escape the conclusion that the belief in life after death is the most acceptable to reason and commonsense.

The above are the articles of faith which form foundation and the bedrock of Islam. One who believes in them enters the the fold of Islam and becomes a member of the Muslim community; but by a mere vocal profession alone one does not become a complete Muslim, this he becomes only when he fully carries out in practice the instructions given by Mohamad as ordained by God. For belief in God makes practical obedience to Him incumbment and it is obedience to God which constitute the religion of Islam. After having acknowledged God as your master and ruler if you refuse to obey him, you are a rebel on your own admission and you cannot escape the wrath of God. Unfortunately, Muslims today have left behind the teachings of their prophet and the commandments of God. They vociferously express and profess belief and obedience to God and his prophet but fail to follow the teachings and put into practice its ideals. The early history of Islam is shining example and

bears testimony to the fact that when man followed Islam in the right way, justice prevailed in the society, crime and offence reduced to such an extent that there were many occasion when criminals themselves confessed their crimes with the hope that God Almighty shall forgive them on the day of judgement. There was peace and happiness in the society, there was no enimity between the rich and the poor because of the system of Zakat (i. e. $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ poor tax) which the rich has to give for the welfare and wellbeing of the poor as their rightful share and which is an important principle of the economic system of Islam. The concept of human fraternity and brotherhood which prevailed in the society then, still serves as a beacon of light to the present world torn apart with war and strife, violence and bloodshed and standing on the verge of distruction. The political system and the principles of the economics laid down by Islam when practise ushered in an era of economic prosperity and introduced in the society the highest democratic norms the like of which the world has never seen. That is the reason even Mahatma Gandhiji had once remarked if one has to rule he should rule like Umar-Bin-Khatab (The second caliph of Islam). It is a great tragedy, that later Muslim rulers turned caliphate the most democratic way of electing a ruler when the world did not know what democracy was, this caliphate was turned into kingship and the Muslim kings and emperors many of whose lives were totally bereft of Islamic teachings began conquring lands and territories and spreading their empire for their personnel power, wealth and glory and the wrong motion took birth that Islam spread through the sword. The Quran clearly and explicity states " The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo, he between whom and thee there was enimity will become as though he was a bossom friend.

In another place Quran states . " Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but begin not hostilities. Lo, Allaha loveth not aggressor " in one more place the Quran states " And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is for Allah, but if they desist then let there be no hostility except against the wrong doers. " The

above verses clearly show that only in cases of self defence oppression or religious persecution in an organised manner that violence is permitted to be put down in a suitable way. This is only because Islam wants to etablish peace in the world. A Muslim stands for peace and in striving for it. he does not hesitate to unsheath his sword even against a brother Muslim if necessary, when all other methods of peaceful persuation have failed. The Quran says " And if two parties of believers fall to fighting then make peace between them and if one party of them does wrong to the other fight that which does wrong till it returns unto the ordinace of Allah then if it returns make peace between them justly and acts equitably, lo, Allah loves the equitable. The Quran also clearly states " There is no compulsion in religion. " It further says " Revile not those unto whom they pray besides Allaha lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignornce". These verses clearly show that Islam is strictly against force, compulsion and agression in any form. Islam spread throughout the world beacuse of its distinctive characterstics as a world religon its simplicity, its explicitenss and its highly realistic attitude towards human problems leaning neither towards excessive optimism nor excessive pessimism. Islam toleates neither those who would make of life an unending revelary a sort of drunken feast nor those who would empty it out of all joy and pleasure, zest and adventure.

Islam regards woman spiritually equal to Man. It also regards her intellectually equal. The only difference it makes is in the realm of physical conditions. Islam believes in the principle of division of labour and allots the strenous work and rough outdoor life to man and makes him responsible for the maintanence of the family. It regards home as the first concern of woman and allots the work of managing the home and of raising and training of children to woman, a work which forms the most important item in the task of Nation building and that of building a healthy and prosperous society. It exhorts her to engage herself in the cultivation of learning and allows her to participate if neccesary in social uplift and other schemes of National Reconstruction.

The life of the office and factory where men and women work together is considered as uncongenial and unnatural for her. She can go to work only in case of extreme necessity. Islam is emphatic in its demand that woman in no case should step into the shoes of man, nor should man encroach upon her sphere of activity. Both should work in a spirit of harmony, sympathy and love. Modesty is a virtue which Islam demands of men and women.

This modern age has turned woman into a piece of merchandise. No advertisement is considered to be sucessful unless it has a picture of a woman's body exposed to various degrees of nudity. Books and magazines do not sell. Films flop if they do not contain Nude and Semi-Nude photographes and Sex appeal. Hotels and Restaurants in the past used to boast of their excellent food and superb service but now they arrange sexual dances and strip tease performances to satisfy their customers.

Woman has been brought out of her home and made discard her clothing. She now appears in mini skrits a bikinis. By this she has lost her sense of self respect and dignity. This hoax has been given the blinding name " Freedom of Woman " and Woman's liberation. But it is man and not woman who has made himself free to exploit woman in every concievable manner. He has made her an object of Sex to be persued and acquired in the name of freedom. The Western nations are already bearing the consequences of this freedom. Family lives are destroyed. Women no more care for and look after their children. It is the Babysitters and maid servants who the children. The result is the bonds of love between the parents and the children break up. The so called freedom of woman has resulted in free sex and the end result is frustration, drugs and deadly diseases like AIDS.

It enjoins moderation and balance of mind in all things. It lays down specific limits and boundaries within the framework of which individual and collective life should be regulated.

Islam is not a religon if we understand by that word something personal and confined to individual life. Islam

does not allow any such bifurcation. It treats life as whole and lays down principles of morality and law covering the whole range of human and social activities. Alone among the religions of the world Islam created a state dominted by religious and moral motives, thereby teaching us that political powers ought to be subordinated to ethical ends and that religion cannot and should not be allowed to serve the end of a state which is not informed and actuated by moral ideas. Alone among the religions of the world Islam made reality of the international brotherhood, in which geographical, national and racial frontiers have no place, brotherhood founded on a common view of life and common principle of conduct, the only real and lasting brotherhood. Islam stands alone among the religions of the world in respect of its complete freedom from the domination of priests and from the burden of elobrate ceremonials. It is a priestless religion because it has done away with rituals and ceremonies.

Fundamentals of Baha'ism

Parviz K. Bidanjiri

Ladies and Gentlemen, Namaskar !

What I am about to outline here this evening, in this hallowed precinct built in the memory of late Mr. Ranade, the great and holy philosopher, is but a summary and that too, a brief, abridged summary of the fundamentals of the Baha'i Faith as I, with my limited powers and faculties, understand.

The Baha'i Faith is an independent religion founded in Persia by Avatar Baha'u'llah. Just as Buddhism was founded against a Hindu background and environment and is yet recognized as an independent religion from Hinduism, so also the Baha'i Faith, although founded in Islamic Persia, is recognized by religious authorities as an independent religion.

First and foremost, I would like to clarify that the Baha'i Faith emphatically denounces physical and/or meterial force, coercion and inducements to coax people to believe in God, let alone the Baha'i Faith. Almighty God has allowed everyone the freedom to believe in Him or not, despite His all-encompassing will and power; in the face of this, who are we puny mortals to presume that we have the right to force anyone to believe in God or for that matter, a particular religion or philosophy, etc.

The basic tenets of the Baha'i Faith are as follows :

1. Almighty God, the Creator, is the unknowable essence, and beyond the ken and understanding of anyone, be they learned or illiterate, the mighty or the lowly. God is the One and Single Who has brought forth and created all that we perceive and all that we have still no knowledge of. No one, however enlightened, and however spiritual, can presume to understand the essence of the Creator when himself or herself being a part and parcel of creation. Everyone and everything

created, by their inherent qualities and attributes, be they physical and/or material and/or mental and/or spiritual testify to the greatness and perfection of Almighty God, the Creator.

2. The Baha'i Faith is the only religion that implicitly and explicitly states in its scriptures that all religions are divine in origin and have come from one source, that is Almighty God. This not only includes religions that are practiced today, but also religions of bygone ages of which no historical documentation exist. The Baha' is believe in Progressive Revelation. This means that the Avatars of the different religions have come from time to time when circumstances necessitated their coming and have given their followers teachings and guidance from Almighty God. These teachings and guidance have been in accordance with the capacity of the followers to imbibe them and not according to the Avatars' capacity or God's, which would be infinite. If the Avatar wished to give teachings and guidance for all time, then it is apparent that even thousands of volumes of Scriptures would not suffice. So the Avatars have come and given us guidance from Almighty God to right the ills that were prevailing at the particular time and in the particular region of society in which they appeared. The Baha' is believe that guidance from Almighty God is infinite and will be sent in stages from time to time when humanity progresses from one stage to another. It can be compared somewhat to the education process where we have to progress from class to class and the teacher in each class teaches us according to our capacity and not according to his or her knowledge. The Baha' is believe that religion consists of two distinctive parts. The main part of religion is the divine teachings such as truthfulness, prayer, honesty, etc. This does not change from religion to religion and when any Avatar comes, he reiterates these divine teachings and causes a spiritual rejuvenation in humanity. The second part of every religion consists of social and personal teachings such as pertaining to marriage, divorce, cleanliness, personal hygiene, etc. This varies from religion to religion in accordance with the time and the location and the needs of the people in which that particular religion is propounded.

The Baha'is have the same respect for the Avataras of every religion as they have for Baha 'u' llah. This is because Baha 'u' llah has explicity stated in His Holy Writings time and again of the divine origin and mission of all the Avatars. Please note that the Holy Writings and Scriptures of the Baha 'i' Faith are the only religious scriptures in the world, at present, that exist and are maintained in Avatar Baha'u'llah's own handwriting with His own signature and seal so that no one may be able to dispute the authenticity. So everything that I say can be checked up by a genuinely interested person. The Baha'is believe, for example, that at one stage Lord Krishna appeared as a guiding beacon to humanity and strengthened the family life of human society. At another stage Moses appeared and Imbibed into human society a greater responsibilty and loyalty by emphasising tribal unity. Yet at another stage Jesus Christ came and effected a unity of a city-state. Then again Mohammad appeared and effected a unity on a national basis. Baha'is believe that Baha 'u' llah has now come to effect a unity on a worldwide basis. Thus His teachings are eminently practicable at the present time, as well as in every region of the world. The Baha 'i' Faith is the only religion that explicitly states that guidance from Almighty God has not ended with the advent of Baha 'u' llah. Baha 'u' llah Himself, in His Holy Writings, prophesizes the appearance of another Avatar at another time when the Baha'i Faith will no longer meet the requirements of the circumstances at that time. Or course, this even has been prophesized by Baha 'u' llah as occurring not earlier than one thousand years after the advent of the Baha'i Faith.

3. The Baha'i believe that humanity is one no matter what their creed, colour, race or religion. Baha'is believe in unity in diversity. God has made this world like a beautiful garden with different hues and varied stock of human beings. A rose is a beautiful flower. But a garden full of roses is not as beautiful as a garden which has roses, violets, hyacinths, mogras, etc. So also human beings in this world come with different colours from different races, different cultures, different customs and habits, and all these contribute to making Almighty God's creation beautiful. But the essence of all

human beings is from the Creator Who created us in His own image out of love for His creation, and hence human beings are all basically one.

4. One of the essential tenets of the Baha'i Faith is independent investigation of truth. This, the Baha'is believe, means that every person, whatever their mental and spiritual capacity, has the right and also the duty to investigate before accepting. Almighty God has put into every human being a soul, irrespective of their mental or spiritual development and this soul will help that person to investigate the truth. The Baha'i Faith is the only religion that does not have compulsion of religion because of birth. This means that when a child if born in a Baha'i family, he or she may, at the age of 15 or thereafter opt to be a Baha'i or not and formally declare so. Just because he or she is born in a Baha'i family, he or she cannot automatically become a Baha'i. The Baha'i Faith does not have priests. It is the only religion where Baha'u'llah has declared that in this modern age of universal education, there is no need for a priestly class. On my part, I think that all Baha'is can call themselves priests or gurus, etc. if they want to. Every Baha'i, whether having accepted the Baha'i Faith as a convert or having accepted the Baha'i Faith after attaining the age of 15 and being born in a Baha'i family, has to be convinced that Avatar Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i Faith He propounded is from Almighty God and the correct guidance to set right the ills of present day world and society.

5. Baha'u' llah has emphatically stated that religion and science are in harmony. Religion without science tends to degenerate into rites, rituals and supersitions. Science without religion, degenerates into crass materialism. The truth of it is that all the Avatars of every religion have propounded the teachings of their religions in harmony with science, and reason, although at the time their followers may not have been conversant with this fact. It is only after ages that religious teachings as originally enunciated by the Avatars have accumulated historical ballast due to the improvisations, additions, alterations, deletions and modifications of their followers and

have at many times made the religious teachings unrecognizable and unreasonable.

6. The Baha' i Faith is the only religion that explicitly propounds the equality of men and women. This equality does not mean that men and women will do the same priorities. Baha 'u' llah states that this equality means that men and women will have the same opportunities regarding education, advancement, career, etc. However, biologically men and women have been created by Almighty God differently and some of the functions that they perform can never be interchangeable. In fact, in the Baha'i Faith, if a Baha'i family have offsprings and if they cannot afford to educate all of them, it is incumbent upon the parents to give priority to the girls' educations first, because Baha'u'llah says that an educated girl, is an educated mother and will result in an educated family after she gets married.

7. The Baha'i Faith propounds universal education. This means that education is compulsory for Baha'is. From my experience of having seen Baha'is in different countries and from different backgrounds, I think it is the first religion where second generation Baha'is have 100% literacy. This is because education, spiritual as well as material, is made compulsory and has become a tenet of the Faith. Baha'u'llah states that where Baha'i parents cannot educate their children, other Baha'is should help them regarding this matter so that education which is a beacon of guidance becomes universal and illiteracy is forever banished.

8. Baha'u'llah has forbidden all types of prejudices. There is no compromise on this and all prejudices means every kind of prejudice. Since this has become a credo of the Faith, I have personally found that second generation Baha'is are among the very few that have the least prejudice regarding creed, colour, religion, philosophy, language, etc. etc.

9. Baha'u'llah has stated that a universal auxiliary language should be taught throughout all the educational institutions of

the world. This universal auxiliary language should be chosen from among the existing languages or a new artificial language which has no national or limited connotations may be invented. e. g. Esperanto, Ro etc. Baha'u'llah states that all the peoples of the world should get together and hold a referendum and choose one of the existing languages of the world or opt for an artificial language which will be taught in addition to mother tongue in all the education institutions of the world. In this way we shall have a link language for the whole world which will expedite the exchange of scientific, educational and other information, encourage the exchange of culture and also serve to lessen misunderstandings on the political front. Not only will we preserve our own mother-tongue but also have unity in diversity.

10. The Baha'i Faith propounds the abolition of extremes of wealth and poverty. This, in no way, means that everyone will be equally endowed with material wealth. Almighty God has created human beings with different capacity for sprituality, knowledge, material wealth, etc. Hence it will not be in accordance with God's will if we try by force to make everyone equally spiritual or equally knowledgeable or equally wealthy. And such a programme will bound to fail. Abolition of extremes of wealth and poverty just means that in Baha'i society the the checks and controls, both voluntary as well as compulsory, will be such as to prevent an individual from amassing such a huge wealth as to be patently obscene and useless and, on the other hand, prevent another individual from sinking to such depths of poverty that he or she may be denied shelter, food, clothing, etc.

11. The Baha'i Faith also propoun'ds an economic order based on spiritual principles. This means that spiritual principles such as justice and charity should guide economic policies. The present day economic orders, whether capitalist or socialist, have been found to be direly wanting in meeting the needs of the present day world where every country is interdependent with others. If Almighty God wanted us to be completely independent, then He would have put all the raw materials

needed for sustenance of present day society in equal amounts in every physical location of the world. But this is not so. Some countries have oil, others have grain, again others have different types of raw materials and some have huge man-power. An economic order that is guided by spiritual principles such as justice and charity will see to it that the exchange of all these resources, human and material, between the different countries in the world, would be equitable as far as pricing and quantity goes. This would mean that we would rid this world once and for all of the consequences of the rich countries getting richer and the poor countries getting poorer, leading to mass starvation, misery and finally war.

12. The Baha'i Faith propounds a world state with a world government and independent world judiciary and legislature. In this world state all the countries of the world would be member states and would have ceded all right to maintain armies, to wage wars, and some rights regarding taxation, revenue, legislation, etc. In turn, this ceeding of rights by the member countries in favour of the world state would mean a drastic reduction in expenditure of arms and abolition of war and a massive increase in technological progress and improvement in the quality of the lives of the people of the world due to the freeing of hundreds of thousands of scientists, technicians, engineers, from defence and war oriented research and manufacture to human progress activity. The member countries of the world confederation would be able to maintain police forces for maintaining internal law and order whereas the world government and state would be the only authority that would be able to maintain an armed force to intervene and bring in line recalcitrant member countries that went against the law of the world state.

Ladies and gentlemen please remember that the above principles and teachings were enunciated by Baha'u'llah in a country steeped in narrow-mindedness, nearly 130 years back. You should khow that 130 years back one could not speak, leave alone practice, concepts such as universal education, equality of men and women, etc., even in European countries.

The Avatars preceding Baha'u'llah may have spoken in general terms about the above principles but they never made it mandatory for the simple reason that an avatar of God always operaters on a human and practical level. Even 500 years back if one talked about equal education for girls and boys, it would be impracticable and absured since when schools did not exist to educate one percent of the male population, how could one think and practise the above concepts. When Baha'u'llah spoke about the above principles in a fanatic country such as Persia, many ridiculed Him. But we Baha'is feel that an Avatar of God feels the pulse of mankind and whatever the Avatar says, Almighty God makes it come true by providing the material means for the fulfillment of the prophecies and practice of the teachings. When Baha'u'llah spoke of one world, nobody in their most exaggerated dream could think about it because there was hardly any communication and no travel between countries, or very little. But, within a few years of Baha'u'llah's propounding a one world system and of teaching one universal auxiliary language concept, there was a tremendous increase in travel and communication between the different countries of the world and the technological progress made not only such a concept and teaching practicable, but also imperative and essential. So also, regarding the teaching about economic order based on spiritual principle. 130 years back such a concept was improbable to say the least. But at present not only is it practicable but absolutely essential. We Baha'is believe that the Avatars of God serve as mediums between the Almignty and creation. An apt analogy would be to think about a human being wanting to look at the sun directly. Since the sun is so bright, if one looked at it directly, one's eyes would be hurt. So instead, one can use a mirror and see the reflection of the sun. But the mirror is not the sun. So also the Avatars of God act as mirrors between creation and the Creator. The Creator is so infinite and limitless, that creation can never hope to understand or encompass the greatness of the Creator. So we have the Avatars acting as mediums and perfect mirrors to convey to us in terms acceptable and understandable to us the greatness of the Creator and His teachings for the age. The Baha'is do not believe that any man, however holy, can achieve

the station of an Avatar. An Avatar is a being Who has been appointed from the day He is conceived, and whatever He may do, He will be an Avatar. And however much any created being may do penance, offer prayers, lead a holy life, etc. he or she can never hope to achieve the station of the Avatar, leave alone the Creator. Now you might think that the Baha'i Faith is in agreement with the Dwaita principle. But I would like to state here that Baha'u'llah has stated that holy people who renounce everything in the world and try to achieve oneness with the Creator do so, relatively. This means that a person who progresses along the mystic and spiritual path reaches a certain stage where He ceases to have an ego and involuntarity loses all his sense perceptions in the face of the Greatness of the Almighty and for all practical purposes, one might say that such a person has achieved union with the Creator. This is also relatively true and here you find that the Baha'i Faith, by offering more comprehensive understanding of spirituality, is in essential agreement with both the Dwaita as well as the Adwaita principle.

Many of the social laws of the Baha's are different from preceding religions. The Baha'is practise monogamy and couples are allowed to divorce but under severely restrained conditions. The Baha'i Faith prohibits alocoholic drinks and drugs, unless under medical prescription. The Baha'i Faith prohibits mendicancy, ascetiscism and monasticism since Baha'u'llah has stated that the society we are going to have will be illserved if we delve in such things. The Baha'i Faith has an administrative (village, town or city unit) then on a country wide level, (national unit), and an international level (world unit). The national and the local governing bodies of the Baha'i Faith are elected every year through adult franchise and the balloting is secret and there is no voting campaign, no candidates and no campaigning or canvassing allowed. On the international level, the world body of the Baha'i Faith which is known as the Universal House of Justice is elected by the national bodies of all the countries of the world, once in five years. The world body is now based in Haifa, Israel, wiere Baha'u'llah is buried. These administrative bodies perform administrative function such as looking after the temples and

administrative centres, collections of donations, etc. The Baha'i Fund can only be donated to by Baha'is, because the Baha'is believe that to give to the Baha'i Fund is a privilege and bounty and also the inclination with which the Fund is given rather than the quantity is important. The Baha'i Temples are structures that reflect the cultures of the land they are built in. The only requirement is that the Baha'i Temple has nine entrances and doors and it can be entered from any side. The nine entrances signify the nine major religions of the world. The Baha'i Temple do not have any statues, relics, etc. but have only the Scriptures of all the major religions of the world and any person professing any faith may enter therein and offer prayers and meditate to his heart's content and satisfaction. No rites or rituals are observed. The devotion of every person is left to the individual.

There are many more things that can be said about the Baha'i Faith, but time is short and I would not like to infringe on the hospitality of the organizers of this meeting, so I would like to end with utmost thanks to you, the attentive audience, and Mr. Parulekar Sr. and Jr.; Professor Deshpande, Mr. Kulkarni and all the honoured members who made this possible. If my speech is able to evince a little bit of curiosity regarding the Baha'i Faith in you, I will deem it as being highly successful. Thank you and Namaskar !

Fundamentals of Theosophy

B. G. Kulkarni

The books dealing with Religion generally fall under three categories viz : Theorotical, Practical (or Ethical) and Spiritual. Even the Bhagwad Gita could be read to know what it contains which is merely informatory; it could be studied to find out if it helps us by furnishing guidelines to solve any difficulties or problems of life and it could also be studied with a view to following the instructions contained therein towards God realisation. Thus it would be clear that the use of any religious book depends on the purpose for which it is studied.

Theosophy is not a religion but it is the essence of all Truth and is the basis of all philosophies, sciences, religions and arts. There is no authentic definition of Thesophy but every Theosophical leader has tried to define it in his own way and light. Madamme M. P. Blavatsky says in her " Key to Theosophy " that Theosophy as it has existed eternally throughout the endless cycles of the past, so it will ever exist throughout the infinitudes of the future because Theosophy is synonymous with everlasting Truth. Dr. Annie Beasent says " Theosophy the divine Wisdom, teaches us to look at the heart and not at the outer appearance; to look at the Divine life and not at the outer material differences. Possibly, in that it will be found the final solution of our many difficulties."

The following, appearing every month on the cover page of ' The Theosophist ' summarizes what the Theosophical Society, which was founded on 17th Nov. 1875 at Newyork, stands for.

"The Theosophical Society is composed of students belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill whatever their religious opinions and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with

others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition and not its anticedent and should rest on knowledge not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform and they seek to remove ignorance, not to punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation and its practice to proselytism. Peece is their watchward, as Truth is their aim."

It is imperative to have a theoretical knowledge of the main principles or fundamentals of Theosophy in order to put into practice these Truths. In other words, knowledge precedes action or practice. In one of the earliest Theosophical books, it is written that there are Three Truths which are absolute, and cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for a lack of speech. They are as great as life itself and yet are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them. These Three Truths are as follows:-

i) The soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.

ii) The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

iii) Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

The above truths merit constant deliberation to gain a rational comprehension of life.

The other principles which could be deduced as corollaries from the above stated truths may well be listed as under:-

a) Man is divine in essence but he needs unfoldment of his consciousness to regain his innate divinity.

b) This is accomplished through two great laws viz : Law of Karma and Reincarnation which help his bodies or vehicles evolve so as to achieve human perfection.

c) Evolution of matter and spirit go hand in hand by inter-acting each other,

d) Constitution of man and Universe is septenary as indicated below.

i) Adi ii) Anupadaka iii) Atmic iv) Buddhic v) Mental vi) Astral and vii) Physical. Each place or body is again sub-divided in seven catagories viz : solid, liquid gaseous, etheric, super-etheric, sub-atomic and Atomic.

e) The evolution of man or life-wave passes through seven kingdoms viz : i) First Elemental kingdom ii) Second Elemental kingdom iii) Third Elemental kingdom iv) Mineral kingdom v) Vegetable kingdom vi) Animal kingdom and vii) Human kingdom. It is stated in the Theosophical books that up to the stage of animal kingdom, there are group souls in Nature and that in human kingdom alone there are individual souls. Further, once an ego possesses an individual soul, there is no retrogression or birth as annimal.

f) The evolution indicated in item (e) above, takes place through 7 Root races which are themselves sub-divided in 7 sub-races each.

The detailed explanation of the above listed principles is not attempted in this paper and the readers are referred to Theosophical literature and books for further study.

Having considered the theoretical aspect of Theosophy as roughly sketched above, the practical or ethical aspect can be well quoted in the able and pregnant words of Dr. Annie Besant as under :-

" Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide evolution. It puts death in its rightful place as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway of a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the spirit teaching man to know the spirit as himself and the mind and the body as his servants. It illuminates the Scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

" Members of the Theosophical society study these truths and Theosophists endeavour to live them. Every one willing to study, to be tolerant to aim high and to work preseveringly is welcomed as a member and it rests with a member to become a true Theosophist. "

C. W. Leadbeater has in his book entitled ' An outline of Theosophy ' described the following as the natural results of study of Theosophical truths which are founded on knowledge and illustrated by daily experience :-

" i) We gain a rational comprehension of life—we know we should live and why and we learn that life is worth living when properly understood.

ii) We learn how to govern ourselves and therefore how to develop ourselves.

iii) We learn how best to help those whom we love, how to make ouselves useful to all with whom we come in contact and ultimately to the whole human race.

iv) We learn to view everything from the wider philosophical stand-point-never from the petty and purely personal side. Consequently:-

v) The troubles of life are no longer so large for us.

vi) We have no sense of injustice in connection with our surroundings or our destiny.

vii) We are altogether freed from the fear of death.

viii) Our grief in connection with the death of those whom we love, is very greatly mitigated.

ix) We gain a totally different view of *life after death* and we understand its place in our evolution.

x) We are altogether free from religious fears or worry, either for ourslves or for our friends—fear as to the salvation of the soul—for example.

xi) We are no longer troubled by uncertainty as to our future fate; but live in perfect serenity and perfect fearlessness.''

This leads us now to the spiritual aspect of Theosophical teachings which is really the true purpose of the study of Theosophy. The theoretical knowledge must subserve the spiritual side of any religion if it has to be meaningful and fruitful. The spiritual aspect of Theosophy relates to those teachings which enable one to find God or to realize the basic truths of life for one-self. " No one would be a true Theosophist who has no direct knowledge of God. "

The theory of evolution which we have considered as one of the important aspects of Theosophical truths furnishes the key to human perfection and Theosophy declares the existence of such perfect men or Masters or Mahatmas who are in charge of the development of human races and guide the evolution of humanity to perfection. They constitute the Hierarchy of the Guardians of the world.

Any person who has a leaning towards the noble and unselfish living can attract the attention of the Masters or the Spiritual Gurdians of mankind, who have reached and passed the superhuman stage and are willing to accept and train disciples for the service of humanity in furtherence of the Divine Plan, which is Evolution. The occult law is ' when the disciple is ready, the Master appears. ' ' *The destiny of every individual is to become Christ, Buddha or Krishna* ' at the end of the evolutionary process. " but it is given to some

persons who by the strenuous efforts, by the practice of virtue; by unselfish labour for human good, by intellectual effort turned to the selfless service of man, by sincere devotion, piety and purity, go ahead of the mass of their fellows and receive spiritul training or assistance from the Masters in order to hasten their growth towards perfection. "

The qualifications which are necessary for fitting oneself as an aspirant and to entitle for the spiritual assistance from the Master or Sadgurus are well known to us. These are Discrimination, Desirelessness six points of good conduct and and Love (or desire for Moksha) which are according to Hindu philosophy विवेक, वैराग्य, षट्संपत्ति and मुमुक्षत्व.

In Theosophical literature we have three books or treatises which constitute the प्रस्थानत्रयी for the Theosophists viz : ' At the feet of the Master ' ' The Voice of Silence ' and ' Light on the Path ' which prescribe the rules of conduct and discipline for all aspirants on the spiritual Path. The path advocated in the first mentioned book is the age-old path of Discipleship and Initiation which are five in number and the last of the five Initiations opens the gateway of superhuman evolution. The Path is also named as the ' Path of Holiness ' or ' Path of Occultism '. It is however, important to note that the emphasis laid on this path is not on the personal liberation or Individual mukti but rather on the spiritual regeneration of the entire humanity. The personal liberation or perfection aimed at or realised is to be utilised for the liberation of other fellow-men also and towardsthis end the aspirant is enjoined from the very beginning to keep in his mind the welfare of the entire mankind. It is stated in the book-' At the Feet of the Master '- that the person who is on the Path lives for others. This Path is also called as the Yoga of Theosophy which is permeated from the beginning to the end with the spirit of selfless service to others. The person who is devoted to the service of all, is really a Liberated Being. In ' Light on the Path ' the aspirant is asked to ' kill out all sense of separateness ' and in ' Voice of Silence ' he is advised " Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of the mankind ?" Quotations from all the three treatises mentioned earlier can be multiplied to

demonstrate that this path is to be trodden by those whose heart is reality set on the amelioration of the condition of man and on his perfection and progression. This is in keeping with the idea that we are progressing towards a civilisation when the community as a whole is the chief thing to be considered and not the individual, ' The state will be more than father and mother, more even than wife and child and every man shall always be ready to give up his own thoughts, feelings and wishes for the sake of unity, common weal or well-being of the whole to which every one shall be willing to sacrificce his personal interests " ' None for the party but all for the State. '

To conclude, it is but meet that the first objective of the Theosophical Society which is " To form a nucleus of the Universal Brother-hood of Humanity without distinction of race, caste, creed, colour or sex " should inspire us to foster the feeling of brotherliness to one and all including the animal and vegetable kingdom and live up to the standard of a Noble and unselfish life in all our dealings. We may well bear in mind the kind given by one of the Masters of wisdom " Harbour not ill-feelings even against an enemy and one who has wronged you, " and as N. P. Blavatasky has stated " it is act lawful for the occultist to seek or even to thirst for revenge. "

Our duty, then, will be to lessen the sorrow, ignoraence, violence and cruelty which is on the increase in the world by ourselves endeavouring to eschow these vices from our mind and life.

Fundamentals of Jainism

Dr. B. B. Raynade

Jain philosophy is frankly realistic and pluralistic. The theory of Anekntavad (doctrine of manifoldness) manfests itself as a very consistent form of realism in Indian Philosophy. Hence there is no room for mere abstract logical analysis of the nature of reality. The Jainas recognise that the Reality or the Universe *exists in itself*, consequently is independent of perceiving mind. From this it is clear that the perceiving mind and the perceived object are real. Both are independent of each other. This very difference naturally results in the development of the *doctrine of reality and knowledge.*

According to Jainism same things are both universals and particulars together, rather they are concrete Universals to borrow phrase of Hegel. *A real is particular which possesses a Universal and has a generic attribute.* A real is but genesis. The real *fulfils all conditions of experience* and meets all the requirements of thought, (वस्तुन: एवं दर्शनं) Being and thought are not opposed to each other. There is no such a thing as logical or ontological priority regarding the relation between the two (Being and Thought). Reals as particulars are concrete facts *embodying the universals in themselves,* but cannot be bereft of universals which alone give them status of reality. The *world of reals is not only a plurality but a unity also;* both are preserved and kept in harmony, neither the unity nor the plurality is slaughtered. The plurality of the Jainas is not a motley crowd of conflicting forces. It is necessary to have a total view of reality in order to ascertain the true character of reals.

The material of the objective world is comprised of *five ultimate reals* : पंचास्तिकायs : Pudgal (matter), ākāsh (space) Kāla (time) dharma (motion) and adharma (medium of rest). The mental or the subjective world consists of a number of

independent minds. The analysis of both these reals, i. e. physical and the mental side compel us to conclude that there *is a pluralistic universe.* Then, reality according to Jainism is not only a world of multiple reals with modes and modifications but each *real is complex to its core.* अनेक stands for complex web of manyness and *anekanta* for manifoldness. The Central thesis of the Jaina is that there is not only *diversity of reals, but each real is equally diversified.* Each real is possessed of an infinite number of modes at every movement, the real chenges every moment, and at the same time continues or as Whitehead says *endures.* The continuity never breaks down. The modes are transitory by their nature, because they are dynamic to the core and their *changefulness is spontaneous;* it is not extraneous or sporadic. In the words of Vidyanand (840 AD), the dravya is endowed with qualities (गुण) which are simultaneous and intrinsic, but they are accompanied by modifications पर्याय which are successive and extrinsic; गुणs *are generic and* पर्यायs *are specific.* Each real is diversified in the process of modification but not bound by the part nor limited by the future. Real is the cause of its own change. Change implies that the thing should become different from what it is.

Reality or substance or dravya has triple character. In the sutra it has been defined-उत्पादव्ययध्रौव्ययुक्तं सत्-उमास्वामी. It means that existence is characterised by origination, destinction and permanence. If one of these characters were identical with the substance, then the other two would be identical, with the result the triple character would be reduced to an identical single mode. The theory of exclusive identity or of exclusive difference cannot be applicable to the relation between modes and substances. The qualities or गुणs which are inseparable from the substance like Goldness in the Gold are subsumed under the categery of सहअनेकान्त contrasting from क्रमअनेकान्त i. e. the पर्यायs are succesive and external.

The notion of manifoldness (अनेकान्त) not merely presupposes the notion of manyness (अनेक) but entails the *activistic*

implication of reciprocity or interaction among the reals in the Universe. Now we will enquire into the *methods of expressing the manifoldness.* The *Jain* philosophers have propounded two ways of explaining the nature of Reality; these are: nayavāda and syādvāda, being natural and inevitable developments of relativistic metāphysics. Nayavāda is mainly analytical, whereas syādvāda is a synthetical method; nayavāda is primarily conceptual and syādvāda is verbal. Jacobi is correct in his observation : syādvāda is a logical compliment than "corollary" of nayavāda. Knowledge derived from a naya is partial and incomplete; syādvāda is more comprehensive since it describes all the existence of other attributes but does not give primary importance to them; hence the *judgements should be conditional and not categorical.* The sevenfold predication about the nature of a real is *not the result of a mere subjective* necessity which has nothing to do with the objective status of attributes. All assertions are traceable to an objective situation; the predicates are but the expressions of real attributes of an object. A thing can be *known fully as it is in itself, only when it is known to be what it is not. To know is to judge or to distinguish.* The Jain is a non-absolutist or अनेकान्तवादी in the sense he accepts both sets of attributes as the true *determination of the real* : unique and common, particular and universal, positive and negative, rolled into one. In short, *non-absolute is constituted of absolutes* as its elements and as such would not be possible if there were no absolutes. To illustrate in the words of Akalanka: as the tree disappears if the branches and members are taken out, so the non-absolute would similarly vanish if the absolute elements were not there. According to Akalanka, Anekāntavāda is not a quibbling of words or mere casuistry- छलमात्रम् अनेकान्त इति चेत्, छल लक्षणाभावात्- Anekantavāda demystifies out ideas about the nature of reality generally held by many that reality is a mystery.

Just Jainas enunciate the views of Reality, they inculcate a way of life for the redemption from the chain of life and death. The main emphasis is on the ethical rules for the spiritual development. The doctrines propounded by the Jain philo-

sopher are *life-oriented* and not imposed upon a spiritual adherent ex cathedra. Man is essentially a *religious being.* The actual life is being lived now and for it he needs self-realisation, that he may know how to live it. Religion starts with the assumption of *highest reality realisable by man,* not only thinkable. No realisation can be effected unless the mind is engaged in that direction. Self realisation ultimately depends upon one's *own efforts* ; but it becomes more effective with the path laid down by the Tirthankaras. The realisation of divine power demands certain power of appreciation of those in whom it has already been realised. The *knowledge of Sidhahood* like all knowledge is first confined to the bhavya-jivas. Self discipline i. e. cultivation of rigid ethical rules is the basis of spiritual life : चारित्तं खलु धम्मो in the words of Kundakunda. It is a training of the will, a self-culture ; it is a development of character. Perfect Man implies that every character has an *ideal completeness,* the attainment of which depends upon the measure of man's *self-control.* Self-control leads one to the realisation of one's ethical and religious duties. He ought to do the duty ethical and religious if he wants to become spiritually supreme. The life of reason, faith and conduct is identified with the life that is perfect, it is a life of vltruable freedom and spiritual power, of truth and virtue of infinite knowledge, infinite power, infinite bliss etc. The perfect life is characterised and sustained by the Ratnatrayas—सम्यक् दर्शन, सम्यक् ज्ञान and सम्यक् चारित्र)– To be eternal is to be everlasting.

Reason has the force of impulse and that impulse is regulative and not merely forceful; it helps to have an insight into the nature of atman. *To be* means to *live and act,* but to act to sacrifice a lot, so that the stage of self-transcendence is the fruit without the transcendental power or grace. Because the concept of grace is co-terminous with the concept of God. Jainas deny God; but from the व्यवहार point of view, they worship Tirthankar, who is an ideal for man. It is the ideal man who is the ideal of man. To worship Tirthankar is to emulate his divine power, but not to propitiate. In the words of Prof. Kiertel, Jainism is neither theistic, nor atheistic, but trans-theistic.

There are fourteen stages of spiritual development known as Gunasthanas. The spiritual adherant has to pass through these stages with extraordinarily rigid ethical path. Task is stupendous, but the saint will accept it; it is way of life. The aim of moral duty is to transcend the theistic tendency, and become a paramatman. Atman is verily knowledge. Self-knowledge is self-blessedness अप्पाणमेव णाणं (in the words of Kundakunda)

Book Reviews

Hindu Dharma

Author : Shri Niranjan Jameedar : pp 49 : Price Rs. 4/-
Published by Geeta Samiti Prakashan : Baba Pawla,
Indore City - 452 004

This small Hindi book contains a few facts which every Hindu should ordinarily know, such as (1) Signs of the Zodiac, (2) Planets, (3) Seven sacred rivers of India, (4) Ten principal incarnations of Vishnu, (5) Four Vedas, (6) Upanishad (7) Paradise, (8) Purgatory etc. " Hindu " has been defined as one who calls himself a Hindu. This is an appropriate definition. Any other definition will not cover the whole class of persons known as Hindus.

There is belief amongst the Hindus that there are तैंतीस कोटि देवता. The Author has rightly explained that " कोटि " means kind and not crore and that there are not thirty three crores of Devatas, but thirty three kinds.

On the whole, this is a good reference book for a Hindu who should go through it once. Printing errors should have been avoided.

- J. P.

Health, Happiness and Spirituality For Elders

By S. K. Aier, Bangalore Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd. Bangalore 1982, Rs. 12/- Pp.V+128.

Sri. Nittor Shreenivasa Rao in his ' Foreword ' to the book under review, has said that " the author has addressed himself to a solution to this problem (of oldage and the associa-

ted psychosomatic troubles,) and in doing so has drawn upon rich experience, experimentation, wide reading and deep reflcetion " (p iii). That is the pronounced intention of the book.

The bodily disorders associated with oldage, like constipation, indigestion, nausea, enlarged prostate, fatigue, visual and auditory problems, heart ailments, obesity, etc. according to the author, can be cured by regular practice of simple yogāsanas, like dhanurāsana, halāsana, sarvāñgāsana, bhujaṅgāsana, Padmāsana, etc. followed by S'avāsana. He also recommends simple forms of prāṇāyāma. He also prescribes optimum quantity of food-intake, walking, freeing the mind from worries and passions. He has also provided (p. 16) the diagrams of some of the useful āsanas which are to be performed regularly. He also claims that he is not just quoting from books on yoga, but that he has discovered this truth by his own experience and experimentation (Pp. 7-10).

The other problems related to old age, namely, sleeplessness and gradual loss of memory, according to the author, can be cured by regular practice of concentration, reading, walking after early supper, placing things at their proper places, etc. Youngsters also can maintain good health by his advice.

The author also prescribes magnetotherapy (p. 21). The reader, however is puzzled as to whether one should undergo magnetotherapy in addition to Yogāsanas and prāṇāyāma.

Good health, according to the author, is not possession of muscular body or high intellect, exclusively, but a combination of these and spirituality. "Spirituality helps you to understand who you are, where you stand in relation to the universe,... what is the role of your ego, what is God", etc. "Spiritual life is real life" (p. 25). Perhaps, the author means by spirituality the Indian way of metaphysical enquiry.

The author boldly claims (1) that the essential concepts of our philosophy can also be established scientifically and (2) that a correct knowledge can bring you considerable happiness (p.27). So he embarks on providing us the required correct knowledge in the subsequent pages.

In chapters IV-XII the author discusses, if briefly, such topics as the origin and growth of prayer and worship, the emergence of priestly class, the superiority of the Dravidian culture during the Harappa and Mohenjodaro civilization. He has also given the quintessence of the main Indian schools of philosophy, such as, Sāmkhya, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Yoga, Mimāmsā, Vedānta, Buddhism and Jainism, and of the Hindu religious treatises like *Bhagavadgitā*, *Avadhūta-Gītā*, *Uddhava-Gītā* and *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (Ch. VI). In Ch. VII he goes on to discuss the origin and development of Hinduism, idol worship, ritualism concept of *avatāra*, and the lives and teachings of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva.

Though the author promises a scientific explanation of the essential philosophical concepts, what he offers is not scientific explanation based on axioms, observation and experiments, but only a rational explanation which he confuses for scientific one. Thus, for example, in the major part of the Ch. VIII, he advances what is familiar to philosophers, namely, the teleological argument for the existence of a Supreme Intelligent Energy. Philosophers have from time immemorial shown that such attempts are always doomed.

Again the author argues (P. 73) that all that appears as matter and non-matter is manifestations of the Supreme Intelligent Energy, or Brahman. Here also he firmly holds, without proper justification, that the energy of the physicists is Brahman.

The author for want of a precise philosophical notion of freedom and determinism, is involved in a self-contradiction. On the one hand he argues that we are not really free, and our actions are determined by the Divine Force, like characters determined in a novel by its author (Pp. 94, 104–109), and argues on the other that equanimity is the cause of happiness and whether we should be happy by means of equanimity or suffer because of detection and frustration is in our hands (P.95) Strangely, he also entertains the belief that " animals do exercise this freewill guided by instincts, but without any know-

ledge of the existence of freewill" (P. 109). It is common place that freewill presupposes rationality, and logically impossible that freewill and instinct go together.

The author in saying that "In all these systems (Sāmkhya, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Vedānta) it is found that there is recognition of a common central principle of one ultimate Reality as the source of everything, though each of them called it by different names such as Prakṛti, Puruṣa, Paramāṇus, Brahman, etc." P. 87), has in effect held that "Prakṛti", "Puruṣa", "Paramāṇus" and "Brahman" are the synonyms of the one central principle. This is to wipe out the very fundamental difference between the Indian Philosophical schools !

The author promises happiness for those who have spirituality, i. e. for those who have correct knowledge (of the Indian Philosophical Schools, at least). Though it is true that a meaningful life depends on a definite world-view and life-view, the author does not make any effort to tell the readers which of the Indian schools is correct, of whether any of them is correct at all. He neither tells us why it should be Indian spirituality (philosophy) rather than a western one; nor does he determine the criteria of correct knowledge which leads to happiness. Most importantly he does not tell us how happiness derives from such correct knowledge.

The author might argue that he wrote this philosophy for those who did not know philosophy. But that would be like one blind man leading another.

Only the first 22 pages of the book are useful, if at all.

Dr. N. G. Mahadevappa
Reader in Philosophy
Karnatak University, Dharwad.

Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion Belgaum.

Report of the Academy for the quarter ending 30th June 1987

The Punya-Tithi Nama Saptah was celebrated in Gurudeo Mandir for five days beginning from 2. 6. 1987.

Dr. P. Naga Raj Rao, Madras delivered Gurudeo Ranade Memorial Lectures on Bhagwad-Geeta for 5 days from 4th April 1987. The lectures were highly intellectual and enlightening. A good number of persons attended these lectures for all the 5 days.

Shri. B. V. Jayanath, Bangalore paid Rs. 100/- and enrolled himself as life-subcriber of Pathway to God.

Donations were received from:-	Rs.
1) Shri. S. H. Deshpande, Tilakwadi	51
2) ,, Suresh Parikar, Goa	5
3) ,, Hemant Deulkar, Sholapur	5
4) ,, K. R. Dev, Pune	15
5) ,, M. B. Gokhale, Ghatkopar, Bombay	51
6) ,, Y. M. Chaugule, Shahapur	500
7) ,, K. M. Bapat, Belgaum	5

We are grateful to these persons for their help to the " Academy " Shri Chougule is enrolled as Donor.

Due to continuous rise in the price of paper and printing charges, the Board has resolved to raise the annual subscription of Pathway to God to Rs. 12/- with immediate effect. Renewal subscription or new subscription may please be sent at this new rate henceforward. It is hoped that the subscribers will not mind this negligible rise in the annual subscription.

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Israelites passing through the Red Sea, that God opened for them to escape slavery in Egypt, Exodus 14:29

All quotations are from the Bible, God's book. It is divided into Old Testament, the ancient Jewish part which foretells the coming of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament, concerning Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, from whose birth the years are numbered.

God, from the beginning of time, sent prophets or messengers to Israel. These were from the beginning of time. To these God said, "In you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 28:14)". At all times did God send his messengers to Israel, establishing the Jewish priesthood (Exodus 40:15). The Old Testament part of the Bible was written by the prophets that God sent to Israel through many centuries. These prophets wrote that God, himself, would live in the world as a man (Micah 5:1 & 2, Isaiah 9:6 & 7, Zechariah 12:10) and be nailed to a cross (Zechariah 12:10, Zechariah 13:6, Isaiah 53:8) and that his disciples would have everlasting life (Psalm 23:6, Daniel 12:2, Micah 4:5). Jesus Christ is God in the personage of the Son of God or God the Son.

God, called Jesus Christ. nailed to a cross near Jerusalem around 33 A. D. (before the Roman Emperor Titus destroyed the Jewish nation in 70 A. D. as prophesied in Genesis 49:10 that it would precede it) and nailed to a cross as prophesied by Zechariah in Zechariah 12:10 and Zechariah 13:6 and Isaiah in Isaiah 53:8

The Son of God, lord Jesus Christ, arose from the dead after three days, and he teaches that those who are born again through the water and the spirit of baptism (John 3:5) and eat his flesh and drink his blood through communion in its form of bread and wine (John 6:53 and Matthew 26:26-28) may have everlasting life. Very many of the events in the life of Jesus Christ were

prophesied in the Bible, in the Old Testament part, incidentally world famous literature, including its famous Septuagint Translation made in Alexandria, Egypt, in 282 B. C., and fulfilled by Jesus as we read in the New Testament part of the Bible, written by Jesus' own apostles, who lived with him every day. Jesus said in the Bible in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." The Bible says that all who do not receive God, who is Jesus Christ, (John 10:30) by baptism and communion will be burned in everlasting fire (Revelation 20:15 and John 3:36). The necessary baptism and communion may be received in any Christian church. The oldest Chrtstians, Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox, say any Christian church is acceptable. This is the decree of the Second Vatican Council (1965) and Bishop Meletios IV of Constantinople in 1922 toward Anglican clergy, including also Roman Catholic clergy.

The New Testament, recommended to be read first because one soon reads Jesus Christ's own words, is much smaller than the Old testament. Many libraries have a copy of the Bible. It contains also God's commandments, which people should keep. The New Testament summarises them. One can buy an ienxpensive Bible or New Testament through the mail from the Bible Society of India, 20 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore 560 001.

World Council of Christian Churches

✠ ✠ ✠

SAVING BEGINS WITH "SARASWAT BANK"...

Many interesting saving schemes to suit your different saving needs

Your savings grow faster with higher interest rates

TYPE OF DEPOSIT

Savings Account/Current Account &
also other Schemes

KALPATARU
CASH CERTIFICATE
RECURRING DEPOSIT

SERVING THE COMMON MAN FOR 69 YEARS

For Prompt Service and Co-operation
VISIT

THE SARASWAT CO-OP. BANK LTD.

Secretarial deptt/Advances deptt
Mittal Court 'A' Wing, 1st floor,
Vidhan Sabha Road, Nariman Point,
BOMBAY-400 021.

Branches all over Greater Bombay as well as in Thane, Pune, Dombivali, Vengurla, Malwan, Aurangabad and Belgaum.